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The works of Alexandre Dumas

Alexandre Dumas

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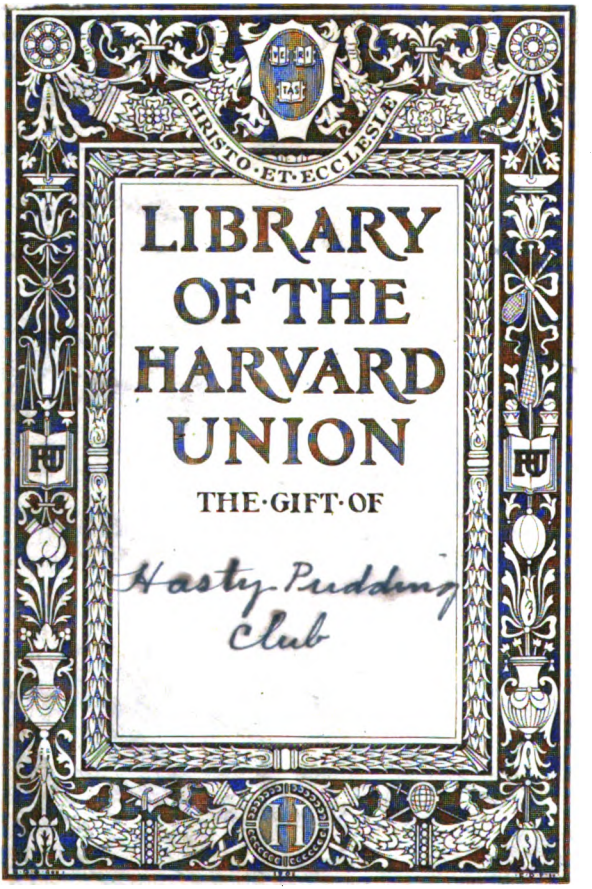

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Mercedes.

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Édition de Luxe

THE

COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF EDMOND DANTÈS

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I.

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON

ESTES AND LAURIAT

1894

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Vol. I.

	Page
Mercedes	*Frontispiece*
Villefort and Dantes	92
The Mad Abbe	160
"He rose on the waves, making signs of distress"	275
"Caderousse placed before him the bottle of wine and a glass"	335

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THE

COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

CHAPTER I.

MARSEILLES—THE ARRIVAL.

On the 28th of February, 1815, the watch-tower of Notre-Dame de la Garde signalled the three-master, the "Pharaoh," from Smyrna, Trieste, and Naples.

As usual a pilot put off immediately, and, rounding the Chateau d'If, got on board the vessel between Cape Morgion and the Isle of Rion. Immediately, and according to custom, the platform of Fort Saint-Jean was covered with lookers-on; it is always an event at Marseilles for a ship to come into port, especially when this ship, like the "Pharaoh," had been built, rigged, and laden on the stocks of the old "Phocee," and belonged to an owner of the city.

The ship drew on—it had safely passed the strait, which some volcanic shock has made in the Isle of Jaros—had doubled Pomegue and approached the harbor under topsails, jib, and foresail, but so slowly and sedately, that the idlers, with that instinct which misfortune sends before it, asked one another what misfortune could have happened on board. However, those experienced in navigation saw plainly that if any

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accident had occurred, it was not to the vessel herself, for she bore down with all the evidence of being skilfully handled, the anchor ready to be dropped, the bowsprit shrouds loose, and beside the pilot, who was steering the "Pharaoh" by the narrow entrance of the port of Marseilles, was a young man, who with active and vigilant eye watched every motion of the ship, and repeated each direction of the pilot.

The vague disquietude which prevailed amongst the spectators had so much affected one of the crowd that he did not await the arrival of the vessel in harbor, but jumping into a small skiff, desired to be pulled alongside the "Pharaoh," which he reached as she rounded the creek of La Reserve.

When the young man on board saw this individual approach he left his station by the pilot, and came, hat in hand, to the side of the ship's bulwarks.

He was a fine, tall, slim young fellow, with black eyes, and hair as dark as the raven's wing; and his whole appearance bespoke that calmness and resolution peculiar to men accustomed from their cradle to contend with danger.

"Ah! is it you, Dantes?" cried the man in the skiff. "What's the matter?—and why have you such an air of sadness aboard?"

"A great misfortune, M. Morrel!" replied the young man—"a great misfortune, for me especially! Off Civita Vecchia we lost our brave Captain Leclere."

"And the cargo!" inquired the owner, eagerly.

"Is all safe, M. Morrel; and I think you will be satisfied on that head. But poor Captain Leclere—"

"What happened to him?" asked the owner, with an air of considerable resignation. "What happened to the worthy captain?"

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"He died."

"Fell into the sea?"

"No sir, he died of the brain fever in dreadful agony." Then turning to the crew, he said:

"Look out there! all ready to drop anchor!"

All hands obeyed. At the same moment the eight or ten seamen, who composed the crew, sprang some to the main sheets, others to the braces, others to the halyards, others to the jib-ropes, and others to the top-sail brails.

The young sailor gave a look to see if his orders were promptly and accurately obeyed, and then turned again to the owner.

"And how did this misfortune occur?" inquired he, resuming the inquiry suspended for a moment.

"Alas! sir, in the most unexpected manner. After a long conversation with the harbor-master, Captain Leclere left Naples greatly disturbed in his mind. At the end of twenty-four hours he was attacked by a fever, and died three days afterwards. We performed the usual burial-service, and he is at rest, sewn up in his hammock, with two bullets of thirty-six pounds each at his head and heels, off the Island of El Girdio. We bring to his widow his sword and cross of honor. It was worth while, truly," added the young man with a melancholy smile, "to make war against the English for ten years, and to die in his bed at last like everybody else."

"Why, you see, Edmond," replied the owner, who appeared more comforted at every moment, "we are all mortal, and the old must make way for the young. If not, why there would be no promotion; and as you have assured me that the cargo—"

"Is all safe and sound, M. Morrel, take my word for

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it; and I advise you not to take £1,000 for the profits of the voyage."

Then, as they were just passing the Round Tower the young man shouted out: "Ready, there, to lower topsails, foresail, and jib!"

The order was executed as promptly as if on board a man-of-war.

"Let go! and brail all!"

At this last word all the sails were lowered, and the bark moved almost imperceptibly onwards.

"Now, if you will come on board, M. Morrel," said Dantes, observing the owner's impatience, "here is your supercargo, M. Danglars, coming out of his cabin, who will furnish you with every particular. As for me, I must look after the anchoring, and dress the ship in mourning."

The owner did not wait to be twice invited. He seized a rope which Dantes flung to him and, with an activity that would have done credit to a sailor, climbed up the side of the ship, whilst the young man, going to his task, left the conversation to the individual whom he had announced under the name of Danglars, who now came towards the owner. He was a man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, of unprepossessing countenance, obsequious to his superiors, insolent to his inferiors; and then besides his position as responsible agent on board, which is always obnoxious to the sailors, he was as much disliked by the crew as Edmond Dantes was beloved by them.

"Well, M. Morrel," said Danglars, "you have heard of the misfortune that has befallen us?"

"Yes—yes! poor Captain Leclere! He was a brave and an honest man."

"And a first-rate seaman, grown old between sky

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and ocean, as should a man charged with the interests of a house so important as that of Morrel & Son," replied Danglars.

"But," replied the owner, following with his look Dantes, who was watching the anchoring of his vessel, "it seems to me that a sailor needs not to be as old as you say, Danglars, to understand his business, for our friend Edmond seems to understand it thoroughly, and not to require instruction from any one."

"Yes," said Danglars, casting towards Edmond a look in which a feeling of envy was strongly visible. "Yes, he is young, and youth is invariably self-confident. Scarcely was the captain's breath out of his body than he assumed the command without consulting any one, and he caused us to lose a day and a half at the Isle of Elba, instead of making for Marseilles direct."

"As to taking command of the vessel," replied M. Morrel, "that was his duty as captain's mate; as to losing a day and a half off the Isle of Elba, he was wrong, unless the ship wanted some repair."

"The ship was as well as I am, and as I hope you are, M. Morrel, and this day and a half was lost from pure whim, for the pleasure of going ashore and nothing else."

"Dantes!" said the shipowner, turning towards the young man, "come this way!"

"In a moment, sir," answered Dantes, "and I'm with you." Then, calling to the crew, he said:

"Let go!"

The anchor was instantly dropped, and the chain ran rattling through the port-hole. Dantes continued at his post, in spite of the presence of the pilot, until this manœuvre was completed, and then he added,

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"Lower the pennant half-mast high—put the ensign in a weft, and slope the yards!"

"You see," said Danglars, "he fancies himself captain already, upon my word."

"And so, in fact, he is," said the owner.

"Except your signature and your partner's, M. Morrel."

"And why should he not have this?" asked the owner; "he is young, it is true, but he seems to me a thorough seaman and of full experience."

A cloud passed over Danglars' brow.

"Your pardon, M. Morrel," said Dantes, approaching; "the ship now rides at anchor, and I am at your service. You hailed me, I think."

Danglars retreated a step or two.

"I wish to inquire why you stopped at the Isle of Elba."

"I do not know, sir; it was to fulfil a last instruction of Captain Leclere, who, when dying, gave me a packet for the Marechal Bertrand."

"Then did you see him, Edmond?"

"Who?"

"The marechal."

"Yes."

Morrel looked around him, and then, drawing Dantes on one side, he said suddenly:

"And how is the emperor?"

"Very well, as far as I could judge from my eyes."

"You saw the emperor then?"

"He entered the marechal's apartment whilst I was there."

"And you spoke to him?"

"Why, it was him who spoke to me, sir," said Dantes with a smile.

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"And what did he say to you?"

"Asked me questions about the ship, the time it left Marseilles, the course she had taken, and what was her cargo. I believe if she had not been laden, and I had been master, he would have bought her. But I told him I was only mate, and that she belonged to the firm of Morrel & Son. 'Ah, ah!' he said, 'I know them. The Morrels have been shipowners from father to son; and there was a Morrel who served in the same regiment with me when I was in garrison at Valence.'"

"*Pardieu!* and that is true!" cried the owner, greatly delighted. "And that was Policar Morrel, my uncle, who was afterwards a captain. Dantes, you must tell my uncle that the emperor remembered him and you will see it will bring tears in the old soldier's eyes. Come, come!" continued he, patting Edmond's shoulders kindly, "you did very right, Dantes, to follow Captain Leclere's instruction, and touch at the Isle of Elba; although, if it were known that you had conveyed a packet to the marechal, and had conversed with the emperor, it might bring you into trouble."

"How could that bring me into trouble?" asked Dantes; "for I did not even know of what I was the bearer; and the emperor merely made such inquiries as he would of the first comer. But, your pardon, here are the officers of health and the customs coming alongside!" and the young man went to the gangway. As he departed, Danglars approached and said:

"Well, it appears that he has given you satisfactory reasons for his landing at Porto-Ferrajo?"

"Yes, most satisfactory, my dear Danglars."

"Well, so much the better," said the supercargo; "for it is always painful to see a comrade who does not do his duty."

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"Dantes has done his," replied the owner, "and that is not saying much. It was Captain Leclere who gave orders for this delay."

"Talking of Captain Leclere, has not Dantes given you a letter from him?"

"To me? no—was there one?"

"I believe that, besides the packet, Captain Leclere had confided a letter to his care."

"Of what packet are you speaking, Danglars?"

"Why, that one which Dantes left at Porto-Ferrajo."

"How do you know he had a packet to leave at Porto-Ferrajo?"

Danglars turned very red.

"I was passing close to the door of the captain's cabin, which was half open, and I saw him give the letter and packet to Dantes."

"He did not speak to me of it," replied the ship-owner; "but if there be any letter he will give it to me."

Danglars reflected for a moment.

"Then, M. Morrel, I beg of you," said he, "not to say a word to Dantes on the subject: I may have been mistaken."

At this moment the young man returned, and Danglars retreated as before.

"Well, my dear Dantes, are you now free?" inquired the owner.

"Yes, sir."

"You have not been long detained?"

"No. I gave the custom-house officers a copy of our bill of lading; and as to the other papers, they sent a man off with the pilot, to whom I gave them."

"Then you have nothing more to do here?"

"No; all is arranged now."

"Then you can come and dine with me?"

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"Excuse me, M. Morrel, excuse me, if you please; but my first visit is due to my father, though I am not the less grateful for the honor you have done me."

"Right, Dantes, quite right. I always knew you were a good son."

"And," inquired Dantes, with some hesitation, "do you know how my father is?"

"Well, I believe, my dear Edmond, although I have not seen him lately."

"Yes, he likes to keep himself shut up in his little room."

"That proves, at least, that he has wanted for nothing during your absence."

Dantes smiled. "My father is proud, sir; and if he had not a meal left I doubt if he would have asked anything from any one, except God."

"Well, then, after this visit has been made we rely on you."

"I must again excuse myself, M. Morrel: for after this first visit has been paid I have another, which I am most anxious to pay."

"True, Dantes, I forgot that there was at the Catalans some one who expects you no less impatiently than your father—the lovely Mercedes."

Dantes blushed.

"Ah! ah!" said the shipowner, "that does not astonish me, for she has been to me three times, inquiring if there were any news of the 'Pharaoh.' *Preste!* Edmond, you have a very handsome mistress!"

"She is not my mistress," replied the young sailor, gravely; "she is my betrothed."

"Sometimes one and the same thing," said Morrel with a smile.

"Not with us, sir," replied Dantes.

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"Well, well, my dear Edmond," continued the owner, "do not let me detain you. You have managed my affairs so well, that I ought to allow you all the time you require for your own. Do you want any money?"

"No, sir; I have all my pay to take—nearly three months' wages."

"You are a careful fellow, Edmond."

"Say I have a poor father, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know how good a son you are, so now haste away to see your father. I have a son too, and I should be very wroth with those who detained him from me after a three months' voyage."

"Then I have your leave, sir?"

"Yes, if you have nothing more to say to me."

"Nothing."

"Captain Leclere did not, before he died, give you a letter for me?"

"He was unable to write, sir. But that reminds me that I must ask your leave of absence for some days."

"To get married?"

"Yes, first, and then to go to Paris."

"Very good: have what time you require, Dantes. It will take quite six weeks to unload the cargo, and we cannot get you ready for sea until three months after that; only be back again in three months, for the 'Pharaoh,'" added the owner, patting the young sailor on the back, "cannot sail without her captain."

"Without her captain!" cried Dantes, his eyes sparkling with animation; "pray mind what you say, for you are touching on the most secret wishes of my heart. Is it really your intention to nominate me captain of the 'Pharaoh?'"

"If I were sole owner I would nominate you this moment, my dear Dantes, and say it is settled; but I

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have a partner, and you know the Italian proverb—*Che a campagno a padrone*—'He who has a partner has a master.' But the thing is at least half done, as you have one out of two voices. Rely on me to procure you the other; I will do my best."

"Ah! M. Morrel," exclaimed the young seaman, with tears in his eyes, and grasping the owner's hand, "M. Morrel, I thank you in the name of my father, and of Mercedes."

"Good, good! Edmond. There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft that keeps a good watch for good fellows! Go to your father; go and see Mercedes, and come to me afterwards."

"Shall I row you on shore?"

"No, I thank you, I shall remain and look over the accounts with Danglars. Have you been satisfied with him this voyage?"

"That is according to the sense you attach to the question, sir. Do you mean is he a good comrade? No, for I think he never liked me since the day when I was silly enough, after a little quarrel we had, to propose to him to stop for ten minutes at the Isle of Monte-Cristo to settle the dispute, a proposition which I was wrong to suggest, and he quite right to refuse. If you mean as responsible agent that you ask me the question, I believe there is nothing to say against him, and that you will be content with the way in which he has performed his duty."

"But tell me, Dantes, if you had command of the 'Pharaoh,' should you have pleasure in retaining Danglars?"

"Captain or mate, M. Morrel," replied Dantes, "I shall always have the greatest respect for those who possess our owners' confidence."

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"Good! good! Dantes. I see you are a thorough good fellow, and will detain you no longer. Go, for I see how impatient you are."

"Then I have leave?"

"Go, I tell you."

"May I have the use of your skiff?"

"Certainly."

"Then for the present, M. Morrel, farewell, and a thousand thanks!"

"I hope soon to see you again, my dear Edmond. Good luck to you."

The young sailor jumped into the skiff and sat down in the stern, desiring to be put ashore at the Canebiere.

The two rowers bent to their work, and the little boat glided away as rapidly as possible in the midst of the thousand vessels which choke up the narrow way which leads between the two rows of ships from the mouth of the harbor to the Quai d'Orleans.

The shipowner, smiling, followed him with his eyes, until he saw him spring out on the quay, and disappear in the midst of the throng which, from five o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night, choke up this famous street of La Canebiere, of which the modern Phoceens are so proud, and say with all the gravity in the world, and with that accent which gives so much character to what is said, "If Paris had La Canebiere, Paris would be a second Marseilles." On turning round, the owner saw Danglars behind him, who apparently attended his orders, but in reality followed, as he did, the young sailor with his eyes; only there was a great difference in the expression of the looks of the two men who thus watched the movements of Edmond Dantes.

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CHAPTER II.

FATHER AND SON.

We will leave Danglars struggling with the feelings of hatred and endeavoring to insinuate in the ear of the shipowner, Morrel, some evil suspicions against his comrade, and follow Dantes; who, after having traversed the Canebiere, took the Rue de Noailles, and entering into a small house, situated on the left side of the Allees de Meillan, rapidly ascended four stories of a dark staircase, holding the baluster in his hand, whilst with the other he repressed the beatings of his heart, and paused before a half-open door, which revealed all the interior of a small apartment.

This apartment was occupied by Dantes' father.

The news of the arrival of the "Pharaoh" had not yet reached the old man, who, mounted on a chair, was amusing himself with staking some nasturtiums with tremulous hand, which, mingled with clematis, formed a kind of trellis at his window.

Suddenly he felt an arm thrown round his body, and a well-known voice behind him exclaimed, "Father! dear father!"

The old man uttered a cry, and turned round; then seeing his son, he fell into his arms pale and trembling.

"What ails you, my dearest father? Are you ill?" inquired the young man, much alarmed.

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"No, no, my dear Edmond—my boy—my son!—no; but I did not expect you; and joy, the surprise of seeing you so suddenly. Ah! I really seem as if I were going to die!"

"Come, come, cheer up, my dear father. 'Tis I—really I! They say joy never hurts, and so I come to you without any warning. Come now, look cheerfully at me, instead of gazing as you do with your eyes so wild. Here I am back again, and we will now be happy."

"Yes, yes, my boy, so we will—so we will," replied the old man; "but how shall we be happy? Will you never leave me again? Come, tell me all the good fortune that has befallen you."

"God forgive me," said the young man, "for rejoicing at happiness derived from the misery of others; but Heaven knows I did not seek this good fortune; it has happened, and I really cannot affect to lament it. The good Captain Leclere is dead, father, and it is probable that, with the aid of M. Morrel, I shall have his place. Do you understand, father? Only imagine me a captain at twenty, with a hundred louis pay, and a share in the profits! Is not this more than a poor sailor like me could have hoped for?"

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the old man, "and much more than you could have expected."

"Well, then, with the first money I touch, I mean you to have a small house, with a garden to plant your clematis, your nasturtiums, and your honeysuckles. But what ails you, father? Are not you well?"

"'Tis nothing, nothing; it will soon pass away;" and as he said so the old man's strength failed him, and he fell backward.

"Come, come," said the young man, "a glass of wine,

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father, will revive you. Where do you keep your wine?"

"No, no, thank ye. You need not look for it, I do not want it," said the old man.

"Yes, yes, father, tell me where it is;" and he opened two or three cupboards.

"It is no use," said the old man; "there is no wine."

"What! no wine?" said Dantes, turning pale, and looking alternately at the hollow cheeks of the old man and the empty cupboards. "What, no wine? Have you wanted money, father?"

"I want nothing since I see you," said the old man.

"Yet," stammered Dantes, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "yet I gave you two hundred francs when I left three months ago."

"Yes, yes, Edmond, that is true; but you forgot at that time a little debt to our neighbor Caderousse. He reminded me of it, telling me if I did not pay for you, he would be paid by M. Morrel; and so, you see, lest he might do you an injury—"

"Well?"

"Why, I paid him."

"But," cried Dantes, "it was a hundred and forty francs I owed Caderousse."

"Yes," stammered the old man.

"And you paid him out of the two hundred francs I left you?"

The old man made a sign in the affirmative.

"So that you have lived for three months on sixty francs?" muttered the young man.

"You know how little I require," said the old man.

"Heaven pardon me!" cried Edmond, going on his knees before the old man.

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"What are you doing?"

"You have wounded my very heart."

"Never mind it, for I see you once more," said the old man; "and now all is forgotten—all is well again."

"Yes, here I am," said the young man, "with a happy prospect and a little money. Here, father, here!" he said, "take this—take it, and send for something immediately."

And he emptied his pockets on the table, whose contents consisted of a dozen pieces of gold, five or six crowns, and some smaller coin.

The countenance of old Dantes brightened.

"Whom does this belong to?" he inquired.

"To me, to you! to us! Take it; buy some provisions; be happy, and to-morrow we shall have more."

"Gently, gently," said the old man, with a smile: "and by your leave I will use your purse moderately, for they would say, if they saw me buy too many things at a time, that I had been obliged to await your return in order to be able to purchase them."

"Do as you please; but first of all, pray have a servant, father. I will not have you left alone so long. I have some smuggled coffee and most capital tobacco, in a small chest in the hold, which you shall have to-morrow. But, hush! here comes somebody."

"'Tis Caderousse, who has heard of your arrival, and no doubt comes to congratulate you on your fortunate return."

"Ah! lips that say one thing, whilst the heart thinks another," murmured Edmond. "But never mind, he is a neighbor who has done us a service on a time, so he's welcome." As Edmond finished his sentence in a low voice, there appeared at the door the black and shock head of Caderousse. He was a man of twenty-five or

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twenty-six years of age, and held in his hand a morsel of cloth, which, in his capacity as a tailor, he was about to turn into the lining of a coat.

"What! is it you, Edmond, returned?" said he, with a broad Marseilles accent, and a grin that displayed his teeth as white as ivory.

"Yes, as you see, neighbor Caderousse, and ready to be agreeable to you in any and every way," replied Dantes, but ill concealing his feeling under this appearance of civility.

"Thanks—thanks; but, fortunately, I do not want for anything; and it chances that at times there are others who have need of me." Dantes made a gesture. "I do not allude to you, my boy. No, no. I lent you money, and you returned it; that's like good neighbors, and we are quits."

"We are never quits with those who oblige us," was Dantes' reply; "for when we do not owe them money, we owe them gratitude."

"What's the use of mentioning that? What is done is done. Let us talk of your happy return, my boy. I had gone on the quay to match a piece of mulberry cloth, when I met friend Danglars. 'What! you at Marseilles?' 'Yes,' says he. 'I thought you were at Smyrna.' 'I was; but am now back again.' 'And where is the dear boy, our little Edmond?' 'Why, with his father, no doubt,' replied Danglars. And so I came," added Caderousse, "as fast as I could, to have the pleasure of shaking hands with a friend."

"Worthy Caderousse!" said the old man; "he is so much attached to us!"

"Yes, to be sure I am. I love and esteem you, because honest folks are so rare! But it seems you have come back rich, my boy," continued the tailor, looking askance

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at the handful of gold and silver which Dantes had thrown on the table.

The young man remarked the greedy glance which shone in the dark eyes of his neighbor.

"Eh!" he said, negligently, "this money is not mine; "I was expressing to my father my fears that he had wanted many things in my absence, and to convince me, he emptied his purse on the table. Come, father," added Dantes, "put this money back in your box—unless neighbor Caderousse wants anything, and in that case it is at his service."

"No, my boy, no," said Caderousse. "I am not in any want, thank God; the State nourishes me. Keep your money—keep it, I say; one never has too much; but at the same time, my boy, I am as much obliged by your offer as if I took advantage of it."

"It was offered with good will," said Dantes.

"No doubt, my boy; no doubt. Well, you stand well with M. Morrel, I hear—you insinuating dog, you!"

"M. Morrel has always been exceedingly kind to me," replied Dantes.

"Then you were wrong to refuse to dine with him."

"What! did you refuse to dine with him?" said old Dantes; "and did he invite you to dine?"

"Yes, my dear father," replied Edmond, smiling at his father's astonishment at the excessive honor paid to his son.

"And why did you refuse, my son!" inquired the old man.

"That I might the sooner see you again, my dear father," replied the young man. "I was most anxious to see you."

"But it must have vexed M. Morrel, good, worthy man," said Caderousse. "And when you are look-

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ing forward to be captain, it was wrong to annoy the owner."

"But I explained to him the cause of my refusal," replied Dantes; "and I hope he fully understood it."

"Yes, but to be captain, one must give way a little to one's patrons."

"I hope to be captain without that," said Dantes.

"So much the better—so much the better! Nothing will give greater pleasure to all your old friends; and I know one down there behind the citadel of Saint Nicolas who will not be sorry to hear it."

"Mercedes?" said the old man.

"Yes, my dear father, and with your permission, now I have seen you, and know you are well, and have all you require, I will ask your consent to go and pay a visit to the Catalans."

"Go, my dear boy," said old Dantes; "and Heaven bless you in your wife as it has blessed me in my son."

"His wife!" said Caderousse; "why, how fast you go on, father Dantes; she is not his wife yet, it appears."

"No, but according to all probability she soon will be," replied Edmond.

"Yes—yes," said Caderousse; "but you were right to return as soon as possible, my boy."

"And why?"

"Because Mercedes is a very fine girl, and fine girls never lack lovers; she, particularly, has them by dozens."

"Really?" answered Edmond, with a smile which had in it traces of slight uneasiness.

"Ah, yes," continued Caderousse, "and capital offers too; but you know you will be captain, and who could refuse you then?"

"Meaning to say," replied Dantes, with a smile which

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but ill concealed his trouble, "that if I were not a captain—"

"Eh—eh?" said Caderousse, shaking his head.

"Come, come," said the sailor, "I have a better opinion than you of women in general, and of Mercedes in particular; and I am certain that, captain or not, she will remain ever faithful to me."

"So much the better—so much the better," said Caderousse. "When one is going to be married, there is nothing like implicit confidence; but never mind that, my boy, but go and announce your arrival, and let her know all your hopes and prospects."

"I will go directly," was Edmond's reply—and, embracing his father, and saluting Caderousse, he left the apartment.

Caderousse lingered for a moment, then taking leave of old Dantes, he went downstairs to rejoin Danglars, who awaited him at the corner of the Rue Senac.

"Well," said Danglars, "did you see him?"

"I have just left him," answered Caderousse.

"Did he allude to his hope of being captain?"

"He spoke of it as a thing already decided."

"Patience!" said Danglars, "he is in too much hurry, it appears to me."

"Why, it seems M. Morrel has promised him the thing."

"So that he is quite elate about it?"

"That is to say, he is actually insolent on the matter—has already offered me his patronage, as if he were a grand personage, and proffered me a loan of money as though he were a banker."

"Which you refused."

"Most assuredly; although I might easily have accepted, for it was I who put into his hand the first

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silver he ever earned; but now M. Dantes has no longer any occasion for assistance—he is about to become a captain."

"Pooh!" said Danglars, "he is not one yet."

"*Ma foi!*—and it will be as well he never should be," answered Caderousse; "for if he should be, there will be really no speaking to him."

"If we choose," replied Danglars, "he will remain what he is, and, perhaps, become even less than he is."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing—I was speaking to myself."

"And is he still in love with the Catalane?"

"Over head and ears; but unless I am much mistaken, there will be a storm in that quarter."

"Explain yourself."

"Why should I?"

"It is more important than you think, perhaps. You do not love Dantes?"

"I never like upstarts."

"Then tell me all you know relative to the Catalane."

"I know nothing for certain; only I have seen things which induce me to believe, as I told you, that the future captain will find some annoyance in the environs of the Vieilles Infirmeries."

"What do you know?—come, tell me!"

"Well, every time I have seen Mercedes come into the city, she has been accompanied by a tall, strapping, black-eyed Catalan, with a red complexion, brown skin, and fierce air, whom she calls cousin."

"Really; and you think this cousin pays attentions?"

"I only suppose so. What else can a strapping chap of twenty-one mean with a fine wench of seventeen?"

"And you say Dantes has gone to the Catalans?"

"He went before I came down."

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"Let us go the same way; we will stop at La Reserve, and we can drink a glass of La Malgue, whilst we wait for news."

"Come along," said Caderousse; "but mind you pay the shot."

"Certainly," replied Danglars; and going quickly to the spot alluded to, they called for a bottle of wine and two glasses.

Pere Pamphile had seen Dantes pass not ten minutes before; and, assured that he was at the Catalans, they sat down under the budding foliage of the planes and sycamores, in the branches of which the birds were joyously singing on a lovely day in early spring.

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CHAPTER III.

THE CATALANS.

ABOUT a hundred paces from the spot where the two friends were, with their looks fixed on the distance, and their ears attentive, whilst they imbibed the sparkling wine of La Malgue, behind a bare, and torn, and weather-worn wall, was the small village of the Catalans. One day a mysterious colony quitted Spain, and settled on the tongue of land on which it is to this day. It arrived from no one knew where, and spoke an unknown tongue. One of its chiefs, who understood Provencal, begged the commune of Marseilles to give them his bare and barren promontory, on which, like the sailors of the ancient times, they had run their boats ashore. The request was granted, and three months afterwards, around the twelve or fifteen small vessels which had brought these gipsies of the sea, a small village had sprung up.

This village, constructed in a singular and picturesque manner, half Moorish, half Spanish, is that we behold at the present day inhabited by the descendants of those men, who speak the language of their fathers. For three or four centuries they remained faithful to this small promontory, on which they had settled like a flight of sea-birds, without mixing with the Marseilles population, intermarrying, and preserving their origi-

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nal costumes and the customs of their mother country, as they have preserved its language.

Our readers will follow us along the only street of this little village, and enter with us into one of the houses, on the outside of which the sun had stamped that beautiful color of the dead leaf peculiar to the buildings of the country, and within a coat of lime-wash, of that white tint which forms the only ornament of Spanish posadas.

A young and beautiful girl, with hair as black as jet, her eyes as velvety as the gazelle's, was leaning with her back against the wainscot, rubbing in her slender fingers, moulded after the antique, a bunch of heath blossoms, the flowers of which she was picking off and strewing on the floor; her arms, bare to the elbow, embrowned, and resembling those of the Venus at Arles, moved with a kind of restless impatience, and she tapped the earth with her pliant and well-formed foot, so as to display the pure and full shape of her well-turned leg, in its red cotton stocking with gray and blue clocks.

At three paces from her, seated in a chair which he balanced on two legs, leaning his elbow on an old worm-eaten table, was a tall young man of twenty or two-and-twenty who was looking at her with an air in which vexation and uneasiness were mingled. He questioned her with his eyes, but the firm and steady gaze of the young girl controlled his look.

"You see, Mercedes," said the young man, "here is Easter come round again; tell me, is this the moment for a wedding?"

"I have answered you a hundred times, Fernand, and really you must be your own enemy to ask me again."

"Well, repeat it—repeat it, I beg of you, that I may

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at last believe it! Tell me for the hundredth time that you refuse my love, which had your mother's sanction. Make me fully comprehend that you are trifling with my happiness, that my life or death are immaterial to you. Ah! to have dreamed for ten years of being your husband, Mercedes, and to lose that hope which was the only stay of my existence!"

"At least, it was not I who ever encouraged you in that shape, Fernand," replied Mercedes; "you cannot reproach me with the slightest coquetry. I have always said to you, I love you as a brother, but do not ask from me more than sisterly affection—for my heart is another's. Is not this true, Fernand?"

"Yes, I know it well, Mercedes," replied the young man. "Yes, you have been cruelly frank with me; but do you forget that it is among the Catalans a sacred law to intermarry?"

"You mistake, Fernand, it is not a law, but merely a custom; and, I pray of you, do not cite this custom in your favor. You are included in the conscription, Fernand, and are only at liberty on sufferance, liable at any moment to be called upon to take up arms. Once a soldier, what would you do with me, a poor orphan, forlorn, without fortune, with nothing but a hut, half in ruins, containing some ragged nets, a miserable inheritance left by my father to my mother, and by my mother to me? She has been dead a year, and you know, Fernand, I have subsisted almost entirely on public charity. Sometimes you pretend I am useful to you, and that is an excuse to share with me the produce of your fishing, and I accept it, Fernand, because you are the son of my father's brother, because we were brought up together, and still more, because it would give you so much pain if I refused. But I feel very deeply that

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this fish which I go and sell, and with the produce of which I buy the flax I spin—I feel very keenly, Fernand, that this is charity."

"And if it were, Mercedes, poor and lone as you are, you suit me as well as the daughter of the first shipowner or the richest banker of Marseilles! What do such as we desire but a good wife and a careful housekeeper, and where can I look for these better than in you?"

"Fernand," answered Mercedes, shaking her head, "a woman becomes a bad manager; and who shall say she will remain an honest woman, when she loves another man better than her husband? Rest content with my friendship, for I repeat to you that it is all I can promise, and I will promise no more than I can bestow."

"I understand," replied Fernand; "you can endure your own wretchedness patiently, but you are afraid of mine. Well, Mercedes, beloved by you I would tempt fortune. You would bring me good luck, and I should become rich. I could extend my operations as a fisherman, might get a place as a clerk in a warehouse, and become myself a dealer, in time."

"You could do no such thing, Fernand; you are a soldier, and if you remain at the Catalans it is because there is not a war; so remain a fisherman and contented with my friendship, as I cannot give you more."

"Well, you are right, Mercedes. I will be a sailor; instead of the costume of our fathers, which you despise, I will wear a varnished hat, a striped shirt, and a blue jacket, with an anchor on the buttons. Would not that dress please you?"

"What do you mean?" asked Mercedes, darting at him an angry glance, "what do you mean? I do not understand you?"

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"I mean, Mercedes, that you are thus harsh and cruel with me, because you are expecting some one who is thus attired; but perhaps he you await is inconstant, or, if he is not, the sea is so to him."

"Fernand!" cried Mercedes, "I believed you were good-hearted, and I was mistaken. Fernand, you are wicked to call to your aid jealousy and the anger of God! Yes, I will not deny it, I do await, and I do love him to whom you allude; and if he does not return, instead of accusing him of the inconstancy which you insinuate, I will tell you that he died loving me and me only."

The young Catalan made a gesture of rage.

"I understand you, Fernand; you would be revenged on him because I do not love you; you would cross your Catalan knife with his dirk. What end would that answer? To lose you my friendship if you were conquered, and see that friendship changed into hate if you were conqueror. Believe me, to seek a quarrel with a man is a bad method of pleasing the woman who loves that man. No, Fernand, you will not thus give way to evil thoughts. Unable to have me for your wife, you will content yourself with having me for your friend and sister; and besides," she added, her eyes troubled and moistened with tears, "wait, wait, Fernand. You said just now that the sea was treacherous, and he has been gone four months, and during these four months we have had some terrible storms."

Fernand made no reply, nor did he attempt to check the tears which flowed down the cheeks of Mercedes, although for each of these tears he would have shed his heart's blood; but these tears flowed for another. He rose, paced awhile up and down the hut, and then, suddenly stopping before Mercedes, with his eyes glowing

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and his hands clenched, "Say, Mercedes," he said, "once for all, is this your final determination?"

"I love Edmond Dantes," the young girl calmly replied, "and none but Edmond shall ever be my husband."

"And you will always love him?"

"As long as I live."

Fernand let fall his head like a defeated man, heaved a sigh which resembled a groan, and then suddenly looking her full in the face, with clenched teeth and expanded nostrils, said:

"But if he is dead——"

"If he is dead, I shall die too."

"If he has forgotten you——"

"Mercedes!" cried a voice joyously, outside the house, "Mercedes!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the young girl, blushing with delight, and springing up with love, "you see he has not forgotten me, for here he is." And, rushing towards the door, she opened it, saying, "Here, Edmond, here I am."

Fernand, pale and trembling, receded like a traveller at the sight of a serpent, and fell into a chair beside him. Edmond and Mercedes were clasped in each other's arms. The burning sun of Marseilles, which penetrated the room by the open door, covered them with a flood of light. At first they saw nothing around them. Their intense happiness isolated them from all the rest of the world, and they only spoke in broken words, which are the tokens of a joy so extreme, that they seem rather the expression of sorrow. Suddenly Edmond saw the gloomy countenance of Fernand as it was defined in the shadow, pale and threatening, and, by a movement for which he could scarcely account to himself, the young Catalan placed his hands on the knife at his belt.

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"Ah! your pardon," said Dantes, frowning in his turn. "I did not perceive that there were three of us." Then turning to Mercedes, he inquired, "Who is this gentleman?"

"One who will be your best friend, Dantes, for he is my friend, my cousin, my brother—it is Fernand—the man whom, after you, Edmond, I love the most in the world. Do you not remember him?"

"Yes," said Edmond, and without relinquishing Mercedes' hand, clasped in one of his own, he extended the other to the Catalan with a cordial air. But Fernand, instead of responding to this amicable gesture, remained mute and trembling.

Edmond then cast his eyes scrutinizingly at Mercedes, agitated and embarrassed, and then again on Fernand, gloomy and menacing.

This look told him all, and his brow became suffused and angry.

"I did not know, when I came with such haste to you, that I was to meet an enemy here."

"An enemy!" cried Mercedes, with an angry look at her cousin. "An enemy in my house, do you say, Edmond? If I believed that, I would place my arm under yours and go with you to Marseilles, leaving the house to return to it no more."

Fernand's eye darted lightning.

"And should any misfortune occur to you, dear Edmond," she continued, with the same calmness, which proved to Fernand that the young girl had read the very innermost depths of his sinister thought—"if misfortune should occur to you, I would ascend the highest point of the Cape de Morgion, and cast myself headlong from it."

Fernand became deadly pale.

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"But you are deceived, Edmond," she continued. "You have no enemy here—there is no one but Fernand, my brother, who will grasp your hand as a devoted friend."

And at these words the young girl fixed her imperious look on the Catalan, who, as if fascinated by it, came slowly towards Edmond, and offered him his hand.

His hatred, like a powerless though furious wave, was broken against the strong ascendancy which Mercedes exercised over him.

Scarcely, however, had he touched Edmond's hand than he felt he had done all he could do, and rushed hastily out of the house.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, running furiously and tearing his hair—"Oh! who will deliver me from this man? Wretched—wretched that I am!"

"Hallo, Catalan! Hallo, Fernand! where are you running to?" exclaimed a voice.

The young man stopped suddenly, looked around him, and perceived Caderousse, sitting at a table with Danglars, under an arbor.

"Well," said Caderousse, "why don't you come? Are you really in such a hurry that you have not time to say 'how do' to your friends?"

"Particularly when they have still a full bottle before them," added Danglars.

Fernand looked at them both with a stupefied air, but did not say a word.

"He seems besotted," said Danglars, pushing Caderousse with his knee. "Are we mistaken, and is Dantes triumphant in spite of all we have believed?"

"Why, we must inquire into that," was Caderousse's reply; and turning towards the young man, said, "Well, Catalan, can't you make up your mind?"

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Fernand wiped away the perspiration streaming from his brow, and slowly entered the arbor, whose shade seemed to restore somewhat of calmness to his senses, and whose coolness somewhat of refreshment to his exhausted body.

"Good day," said he. "You called me, didn't you?" And he fell rather than sat down on one of the seats which surrounded the table.

"I called you because you were running like a madman; and I was afraid you would throw yourself into the sea," said Caderousse, laughing. "Why, when a man has friends, they are not only to offer him a glass of wine, but, moreover, to prevent his swallowing three or four pints of water unnecessarily!"

Fernand gave a groan, which resembled a sob, and dropped his head into his hands, his elbows leaning on the table.

"Well, Fernand, I must say," said Caderousse, beginning the conversation with that brutality of the common people, in which curiosity destroys all diplomacy, "you look uncommonly like a rejected lover;" and he burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Bah!" said Danglars, "a lad of his make was not born to be unhappy in love. You are laughing at him, Caderousse."

"No," he replied, "only hark how he sighs! Come, come, Fernand," said Caderousse, "hold up your head and answer us. It's not polite not to reply to friends who ask news of your health."

"My health is well enough," said Fernand, clenching his hands without raising his head.

"Ah! you see, Danglars," said Caderousse, winking at his friend, "thus it is: Fernand, whom you see here, is a good and brave Catalan, one of the best fishermen

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in Marseilles, and he is in love with a very fine girl named Mercedes; but it appears, unfortunately, that the fine girl is in love with the second in command on board the 'Pharaoh,' and, as the 'Pharaoh' arrived to-day—why, you understand."

"No, I do not understand," said Danglars.

"Poor Fernand has been dismissed," continued Caderousse.

"Well, and what then?" said Fernand, lifting up his head, and looking at Caderousse like a man who looks for some one on whom to vent his anger; "Mercedes is not accountable to any person, is she? Is she not free to love whomsoever she will?"

"Oh! if you take it in that sense," said Caderousse, "it is another thing! But I thought you were a Catalan, and they told me that the Catalans were not men to allow themselves to be supplanted by a rival. It was even told me that Fernand, especially, was terrible in his vengeance."

Fernand smiled piteously. "A lover is never terrible," he said.

"Poor fellow!" remarked Danglars, affecting to pity the young man from the bottom of his heart. "Why, you see, he did not expect to see Dantes return so suddenly! He thought he was dead, perhaps; or, perchance, faithless! These things always come on us more severely when they come suddenly."

"Ah, *ma foi*, under any circumstances!" said Caderousse, who drank as he spoke, and on whom the fumes of the wine of La Malgue began to take effect—"under any circumstances Fernand is not the only person put out by the fortunate arrival of Dantes; is he, Danglars?"

"No, you are right—and I should say that would bring him ill-luck."

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"Well, never mind," answered Caderousse, pouring out a glass of wine for Fernand, and filling his own for the eighth or ninth time, whilst Danglars had merely sipped his. "Never mind—in the mean time, he marries Mercedes — the lovely Mercedes — at least he returns to do that."

During this time Danglars fixed his piercing glance on the young man, on whose heart Caderousse's words fell like molten lead.

"And when is the wedding to be?" he asked.

"Oh, it is not yet fixed!" murmured Fernand.

"No, but it will be," said Caderousse, "as surely as Dantes will be captain of the 'Pharaoh'—eh, Danglars?"

Danglars shuddered at this unexpected attack, and turned to Caderousse, whose countenance he scrutinized to try and detect whether the blow was premeditated; but he read nothing but envy in a countenance already rendered brutal and stupid by drunkenness.

"Well," said he, filling the glasses, "let us drink to Captain Edmond Dantes, husband of the beautiful Catalane!"

Caderousse raised his glass to his mouth with unsteady hand and swallowed the contents at a gulp. Fernand dashed his on the ground.

"Eh! eh! eh!" stammered Caderousse. "What do I see down there by the wall in the direction of the Catalans? Look, Fernand! your eyes are better than mine. I believe I see double. You know wine is a deceiver; but I should say it was two lovers walking side by side, and hand in hand. Heaven forgive me! they do not know that we can see them, and they are actually embracing!"

Danglars did not lose one pang that Fernand endured. "Do you know them, M. Fernand?" he said.

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"Yes," was the reply, in a low voice. "It is M. Edmond and Mademoiselle Mercedes!"

"Ah! see there now!" said Caderousse; "and I did not recognize them! Hallo, Dantes! hallo, lovely damsel! Come this way, and let us know when the wedding is to be, for M. Fernand here is so obstinate he will not tell us."

"Hold your tongue, will you?" said Danglars, pretending to restrain Caderousse, who, with the tenacity of drunkards, leaned out of the arbor. "Try to stand upright, and let the lovers make love without interruption. See, look at M. Fernand, and follow his example — he is well behaved."

Fernand, probably excited beyond bearing, pricked by Danglars, as the bull is by the bandilleros, was about to rush out; for he had risen from his seat, and seemed to be collecting himself to dash headlong upon his rival, when Mercedes, smiling and graceful, lifted up her lovely head and showed her clear and bright eye. At this Fernand recollected her threat of dying if Edmond died, and dropped again heavily on his seat.

Danglars looked at the two men, one after the other, the one brutalized by liquor, the other overwhelmed with love. "I shall extract nothing from these fools," he muttered; "and I am very much afraid of being here between a drunkard and a coward. Yet this Catalan has eyes that glisten like the Spaniards, Sicilians, and Calabrians, who practice revenge so well. Unqustionably, Edmond's star is in the ascendant, and he will marry the splendid girl—he will be captain, too, and laugh at us all, unless—" a sinister smile passed over Danglars' lips—"unless I mingle in the affair," he added.

"Hallo," continued Caderousse, half rising, and with

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his fist on the table, "hallo, Edmond, do you see your friends, or are you too proud to speak to them?"

"No, my dear fellow," replied Dantes, "I am not proud, but I am happy; and happiness blinds, I think, more than pride."

"Ah, very well, that's an explanation," said Caderousse. "Well, good day, Madame Dantes."

Mercedes curtseyed gracefully, and said: "That is not my name, and in my country it bodes ill fortune, they say, to call young girls by the name of their betrothed before he becomes their husband. Call me, then, Mercedes, if you please."

"We must excuse our worthy neighbor, Caderousse," said Dantes, "he is so easily mistaken."

"So, then, the wedding is to take place immediately, M. Dantes," said Danglars, bowing to the young couple.

"As soon as possible, M. Danglars; to-day all preliminaries will be arranged at my father's, and to-morrow, or next day at latest, the wedding festival here at La Reserve. My friends will be there, I hope; that is to say, you are invited, M. Danglars, and you, Caderousse."

"And Fernand," said Caderousse, with a chuckle, "Fernand, too, is invited?"

"My wife's brother is my brother," said Edmond; "and we, Mercedes and I, should be very sorry if he were absent at such a time."

Fernand opened his mouth to reply, but his voice died on his lips, and he could not utter a word.

"To-day the preliminaries, to-morrow or next day the ceremony. You are in a hurry, captain."

"Danglars," said Edmond, smiling, "I will say to you as Mercedes said just now to Caderousse, 'Do not

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give me a title which does not belong to me;' that may bring me bad luck."

"Your pardon," replied Danglars, "I merely said you seemed in a hurry, and we have lots of time; the 'Pharaoh' cannot be under way again in less than three months."

"We are always in a hurry to be happy, M. Danglars, for when we have suffered a long time, we have great difficulty in believing in good fortune. But it is not selfishness alone that makes me thus in haste; I must go to Paris."

"To Paris! really! and will it be the first time you have ever been there, Dantes?"

"Yes."

"Have you business there?"

"Not of my own; the last commission of poor Captain Leclere; you know to what I allude, Danglars—it is sacred. Besides I shall only take the time to go and return."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Danglars, and then, in a low tone he added—"to Paris, no doubt, to deliver the letter which the grand marshal gave him. Ah! this letter gives me an idea — a capital idea! — Ah! Dantes, my friend, you are not yet registered number one on board the good ship 'Pharaoh,'" then turning towards Edmond, who was walking away, "Good journey," he cried.

"Thank ye," said Edmond, with a friendly nod, and the two lovers continued their route, calm and joyous.

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CHAPTER IV.

CONSPIRACY.

DANGLARS followed Edmond and Mercedes with his eyes until the two lovers disappeared behind one of the angles of Fort Saint Nicolas; then turning round, he perceived Fernand, who had fallen pale and trembling into his chair, whilst Caderousse stammered out the words of a drinking song.

"Well, my dear sir," said Danglars to Fernand, "here is a marriage which does not appear to make everybody happy."

"It drives me to despair," said Fernand.

"Do you, then, love Mercedes?"

"I adore her!"

"Have you loved her long?"

"Ever since I have known her."

"And you sit there, tearing your hair, instead of seeking to remedy your condition! I did not think it was thus your nation acted."

"What would you have me do?" said Fernand.

"How do I know? Is it my affair? I am not in love with Mademoiselle Mercedes, but for you — seek and you shall find."

"I have found already."

"What?"

"I would stab the man, but the woman told me that

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if any misfortune happened to her betrothed, she would kill herself."

"Pooh! women say those things, but never do them."

"You do not know Mercedes; what she threatens she will do."

"Idiot!" muttered Danglars, "whether she kill herself or not, what matter, provided Dantes is not captain?"

"Before Mercedes should die," replied Fernand, with the accents of unshaken resolution, "I would die myself!"

"That's what I call love!" said Caderousse, with a voice more tipsy than ever. "That's love, or I don't know what love is."

"Come," said Danglars, "you appear to me a good sort of fellow, and, hang me! but I should like to help you, but——"

"Yes," said Caderousse, "but how?"

"My dear fellow," replied Danglars, "you are three parts drunk; finish the bottle, and you will be completely so. Drink, then, and do not meddle with what we are discussing, for that requires all one's wit and cool judgment."

"I — drunk?" said Caderousse, "well, that's a good one! I could drink four more such bottles; they are no bigger than eau-de-cologne flasks. Pere Pamphile, more wine!" and Caderousse rattled his glass upon the table.

"You were saying, sir——" said Fernand, awaiting with great anxiety the end of this interrupted remark.

"What was I saying? I forget. This drunken Caderousse has made me lose the thread of my sentence."

"Drunk, if you like; so much the worse for those who fear wine, for it is because they have some bad thoughts which they are afraid the liquor will extract from their

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hearts;" and Caderousse began to sing the two last lines of a song very popular at the time:

"Tous les mechants sont buveurs d'eau;
C'est bien prouve par le deluge."

"You said, sir, you would like to help me, but——"

"Yes; but, I added, to help you it would be sufficient that Dantes did not marry her you love; and the marriage may easily be thwarted, and yet Dantes need not die."

"Death alone can separate them," remarked Fernand.

"You talk like a noodle, my friend," said Caderousse, "and here is Danglars, who is a wide-awake, clever, deep fellow, who will prove to you that you are wrong. Prove it, Danglars. I have answered for you. Say there is no need why Dantes should die; it would, indeed, be a pity he should. Dantes is a good fellow; I like Dantes; Dantes, your health."

Fernand rose impatiently.

"Let him run on," said Danglars, restraining the young man; "drunk as he is, he is not much out in what he says. Absence severs as well as death, and if the walls of a prison were between Edmond and Mercedes, they would be as effectually separated as if they lay under a tombstone."

"Yes; only people get out of prison," said Caderousse, who, with what sense was left him, listened eagerly to the conversation, "and when they get out, and their names are Edmond Dantes, they revenge——"

"What matters that?" muttered Fernand.

"And why, I should like to know," persisted Caderousse, "should they put Dantes in prison? He has neither robbed, nor killed, nor murdered."

"Hold your tongue," said Danglars.

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"I won't hold my tongue," replied Caderousse, "I say, I want to know why they should put Dantes in prison; I like Dantes; Dantes, your health!" And he swallowed another glass of wine.

Danglars saw in the muddled look of the tailor the progress of his intoxication, and, turning towards Fernand, said: "Well, you understand there is no need to kill him."

"Certainly not, if, as you said just now, you have the means of having Dantes arrested. Have you that means?"

"It is to be found for the searching. But why should I meddle in the matter? It is no affair of mine."

"I know not why you meddle," said Fernand, seizing his arm; "but this I know—you have some motive of personal hatred against Dantes; for he who himself hates, is never mistaken in the sentiments of others."

"I! Motives of hatred against Dantes? None, on my word! I saw you were unhappy, and your unhappiness interested me; that's all; but the moment you believe I act for my own account, adieu, my dear friend, get out of the affair as best you may;" and Danglars rose as if he meant to depart.

"No, no," said Fernand, restraining him, "stay! It is of very little consequence to me at the end of the matter, whether you have any angry feeling or not against Dantes. I hate him! I confess it openly. Do you find the means, I will execute it, provided it is not to kill the man, for Mercedes has declared that she will kill herself, if Dantes is killed."

Caderousse, who had let his head drop on the table, now raised it, and looking at Fernand with his dull and fishy eyes, he said, "Kill Dantes! who talks of killing

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Dantes? I won't have Dantes killed—I won't! He's my friend, and this morning offered to share his money with me, as I shared mine with him. I won't have Dantes killed—I won't!"

"And who has said a word about killing him, muddle-head?" replied Danglars. "We were merely joking: drink to his health," he added, filling Caderousse's glass, "and do not interfere with us."

"Yes, yes, Dantes' good health!" said Caderousse, emptying his glass, "here's to his health!—hurrah!"

"But the means—the means?" said Fernand.

"Have you not hit upon any?"

"No—you undertook to do so."

"True," replied Danglars; "the French have the superiority over the Spaniards, that the Spaniards ruminate while the French invent."

"Do you invent, then!" said Fernand, impatiently.

"Waiter," said Danglars, "pen, ink, and paper."

"Pen, ink, and paper?" muttered Fernand.

"Yes; I am a supercargo; pen, ink, and paper are my tools, and without my tools I am fit for nothing."

"Pen, ink, and paper, then!" called Fernand, loudly.

"All you require is a table," said the waiter, pointing to the writing materials.

"Bring them here."

The waiter did as he was desired.

"When one thinks," said Caderousse, letting his hand drop on the paper, "there is here wherewithal to kill a man more sure than if we waited at the corner of a wood to assassinate him. I have always had more dread of a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of paper, than of a sword or pistol."

"The fellow is not so drunk as he appears to be," said Danglars. "Give him some more wine, Fernand."

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Fernand filled Caderousse's glass, who, toper as he was, lifted his hand from the paper and seized the glass.

The Catalan watched him until Caderousse, almost overcome by this fresh assault upon his senses, rested, or rather allowed his glass to fall, upon the table.

"Well?" resumed the Catalan, as he saw the final glimmer of Caderousse's reason vanishing before the last glass of wine.

"Well, then; I should say, for instance," resumed Danglars, "that if after a voyage such as Dantes has just made, and in which he touched the Isle of Elba, some one were to denounce him to the king's procureur as a Bonapartist agent—"

"I will denounce him!" exclaimed the young man hastily.

"Yes, but they will make you sign your declaration, and confront you with him you have denounced. I will supply you with the means of supporting your accusation, for I know the fact well. But Dantes cannot remain forever in prison, and one day or other he will leave it, and the day when he comes out, woe betide him who was the cause of his incarceration!"

"Oh, I should wish nothing better than that he would seek a quarrel with me."

"Yes, and Mercedes! Mercedes, who will detest you if you have only the misfortune to scratch the skin of her dearly beloved Edmond!"

"True!" said Fernand.

"No, no," continued Danglars, "if we resolve on such a step, it would be much better to take, as I now do, this pen, dip it into this ink and write with the left hand (that the writing may not be recognized) the denunciation we propose." And Danglars, uniting

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practice with theory, wrote with his left hand, and in a writing reversed from his usual style, and totally unlike it, the following lines, which he handed to Fernand, and which Fernand read in an undertone:

"MONSIEUR—The procureur du roi is informed by a friend of the throne and religion, that one Edmond Dantes, mate of the ship 'Pharaoh,' arrived this morning from Smyrna after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been entrusted by Murat with a letter for the usurper, and by the usurper with a letter for the Bonapartist committee in Paris. Proof of this crime will be found on arresting him, for the letter will be found upon him, or at his father's, or in his cabin on board the 'Pharaoh.'"

"Very good," resumed Danglars: "now your revenge looks like common sense, for in no way can it revert to yourself, and the matter will thus work its own way; there is nothing to do now but fold the letter as I am doing, and write upon it, 'To M. le Procureur Royal,' and that's all settled." And Danglars wrote the address as he spoke.

"Yes, and that's all settled," exclaimed Caderousse, who, by a last effort of intellect, had followed the reading of the letter, and instinctively comprehended all the misery which such a denunciation must entail. "Yes, and that's all settled: only it will be an infamous shame;" and he stretched out his hand to reach the letter.

"Yes," said Danglars, taking it from beyond his reach; "and as what I say and do is merely in jest, and I amongst the first and foremost should be sorry if anything happened to Dantes—the worthy Dantes—look here!" And taking the letter he squeezed it up in his hands, and threw it into a corner of the arbor.

"All right!" said Caderousse. "Dantes is my friend, and I won't have him ill-used."

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"And who thinks of using him ill? Certainly neither I nor Fernand!" said Danglars, rising, and looking at the young man, who still remained seated, but whose eyes were fixed on the denunciatory sheet of paper flung into the corner.

"In this case," replied Caderousse, "let's have some more wine. I wish to drink to the health of Edmond and the lovely Mercedes."

"You have had too much already, drunkard," said Danglars; "and if you continue you will be compelled to sleep here, because unable to stand on your legs."

"I?" said Caderousse, rising with all the offended dignity of a drunken man, "I can't keep on my legs! Why, I'll bet a wager I go up into the belfry of the Accoules, and without staggering, too!"

"Well done!" said Danglars, "I'll take your bet, but to-morrow—to-day it is time to return. Give me your arm, and let us go."

"Very well, let us go," said Caderousse: "but I don't want your arm at all. Come, Fernand, won't you return to Marseilles with us?"

"No," said Fernand; "I shall return to the Catalans."

"You're wrong. Come with us to Marseilles—come along."

"I will not."

"What do you mean? you will not? Well, just as you like, my prince; there's liberty for all the world. Come along, Danglars, and let the young gentleman return to the Catalans if he chooses."

Danglars took advantage of Caderousse's temper at the moment, to take him off towards Marseilles by the Porte Saint Victor, staggering as he went.

When they had advanced about twenty yards, Danglars looked back and saw Fernand stoop, pick up the

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crumpled paper, and, putting it into his pocket, then rush out of the arbor towards Pilon.

"Well," said Caderousse, "why, what a lie he told! He said he was going to the Catalans, and he is going to the city. Hallo, Fernand!"

"Oh, you see wrong," said Danglars, "he is gone right enough."

"Well, I should have said not—how treacherous wine is!"

"Come, come," said Danglars to himself, "now the thing is at work, and it will effect its purpose unassisted."

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CHAPTER V.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

THE morning's sun rose clear and resplendent, gilding the heavens, and even the foamy waves, with its bright refulgent beams. The plenteous feast had been prepared at La Reserve, with whose arbor the reader is already familiar. The apartment destined for the purpose was spacious, and lighted by a number of windows, over each of which was written in golden letters the name of one of the principal cities of France; beneath these windows a wooden balcony extended the entire length of the house. And although the entertainment was fixed for twelve o'clock at noon, an hour previous to that time the balcony was filled with impatient and expectant guests, consisting of the favored part of the crew of the "Pharaoh," and other personal friends of the bridegroom, the whole of whom had arrayed themselves in their choicest costumes, in order to do greater honor to the day. Various rumors were afloat to the effect that the owners of the "Pharaoh" had promised to attend the nuptial feast; but all seemed unanimous in doubting that an act of such rare and exceeding condescension could possibly be intended.

Danglars, however, who now made his appearance, accompanied by Caderousse, effectually confirmed the report, stating that he had recently conversed with M.

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Morrel, who had himself assured him he intended joining the festive party upon the occasion of their second officer's marriage.

Even while relating this, loud and enthusiastic bursts of applause from the crew of the "Pharaoh" announced the presence of M. Morrel, who hailed the visit of the shipowner as a sure indication that the man whose wedding feast he thus delighted to honor would ere long be first in command of the "Pharaoh;" and as Dantes was universally beloved on board his vessel, the sailors put no restraint on their tumultuous joy at finding the opinion and choice of their superiors so exactly coincide with their own.

This noisy though hearty welcome over, Danglars and Caderousse were dispatched to the residence of the bridegroom to convey to him the intelligence of the arrival of the important personage who had recently joined them, and to desire he would hasten to receive his honorable guest. The above-mentioned individuals started off upon their errand at full speed; but ere they had gone many steps they perceived a group advancing towards them, composed of the betrothed pair, a party of young girls in attendance upon the bride, by whose side walked Dantes' father; the whole brought up by Fernand, whose lips wore their usual sinister smile. Neither Mercedes nor Edmond observed the strange expression of his countenance; basking in the sunshine of each other's love, they heeded not the dark lowering look that scowled on their innocent felicity. Having acquitted themselves of their errand, and exchanged a hearty shake of the hand with Edmond, Danglars and Caderousse took their places beside Fernand and old Dantes—the latter of whom attracted universal notice. The old man was attired in a suit of black, trimmed

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with steel buttons, beautifully cut and polished. His thin but still powerful legs were arrayed in a pair of richly embroidered clocked stockings, evidently of English manufacture; while from his three-cornered hat depended a long streaming knot of white and blue ribands. Thus he came along, supporting himself on a curiously carved stick, his aged countenance lit up with happiness, while beside him crept Caderousse, whose desire to partake of the good things provided for the wedding party had induced him to become reconciled to the Dantes, father and son, although there still lingered in his mind a faint and imperfect recollection of the events of the preceding night; just as the brain retains on waking the dim and misty outline of the dream that has "murdered sleep."

As Danglars approached the disappointed lover, he cast on him a look of deep meaning, while Fernand, as he slowly paced behind the happy pair, who seemed, in their own unmixed content, to have entirely forgotten that such a being as himself existed, was pale and abstracted; occasionally, however, a deep flush would overspread his countenance, and a nervous contraction distort his features, while, with an agitated and restless gaze, he would glance in the direction of Marseilles, like one who either anticipated or foresaw some great and important event.

Dantes himself was simply though becomingly clad in the dress peculiar to the merchant service—a costume somewhat between a military and a civil garb; and, with his fine countenance radiant with joy and happiness, a more perfect specimen of manly beauty could scarcely be imagined.

Lovely as the Greeks of Cyprus or Chios, Mercedes boasted the same bright flashing eyes of jet, and ripe,

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round coral lips. One more practised in the arts of great cities would have hid her blushes beneath a veil, or, at least, have cast down her thickly fringed lashes, so as to have concealed the liquid lustre of her animated eyes; but, on the contrary, the delighted girl looked around her with a smile that seemed to invite all who saw her to behold, and, beholding, to rejoice with her in her exceeding happiness.

Immediately the bridal *cortege* came in sight of La Reserve, M. Morrel came forth to meet it, followed by the soldiers and sailors there assembled, to whom he had repeated the promise already given that Dantes should be the successor to the late Captain Leclere. Edmond, at the approach of his patron, respectfully placed the arm of his affianced bride within that of M. Morrel, who, forthwith conducting her up the flight of wooden steps leading to the chamber in which the feast was prepared, was gaily followed by the guests, beneath whose thronging numbers the slight structure creaked and groaned, as though alarmed at the unusual pressure.

"Father," said Mercedes, stopping when she had reached the centre of the table, "sit, I pray you, on my right hand; on my left I will place him who has ever been as a brother to me," pointing with a soft and gentle smile to Fernand; but her words and look seemed to inflict the direst torture on him, for his lips became ghastly pale, and even beneath the dark hue of his complexion the blood might be seen retreating, as though some sudden pang drove it back to the heart.

During this time Dantes, at the opposite side of the table, had been occupied in similarly placing his most honored guests. M. Morrel was seated at his right hand, Danglars at his left, while at a sign from Edmond

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the rest of the company arranged themselves as they found it most agreeable.

And now commenced the work of devastation upon the many good things with which the table was loaded. Sausages of Arles, with their delicate seasoning and piquant flavor; lobsters in their dazzling red cuirasses, prawns of large size and brilliant color, the echinus, with its prickly outside and dainty morsel within; the clovis, esteemed by the epicures of the south as more than rivalling the exquisite flavor of the oyster. All these, in conjunction with the numerous delicacies cast up by the wash of waters on the sandy beach, and styled by the grateful fishermen "sea-fruits," served to furnish forth this marriage table.

"A pretty silence, truly!" said the old father of the bridegroom, as he carried to his lips a glass of wine of the hue and brightness of the topaz, and which had just been placed before Mercedes herself. "Now, would anybody think that this room contained a happy, merry party, who desire nothing better than to laugh and dance the hours away?"

"Ah!" sighed Caderousse, "a man cannot always feel happy because he is about to be married!"

"The truth is," replied Dantes, "that I am too happy for noisy mirth; if that is what you meant by your observation, my worthy friend, you were right; joy takes a strange effect at times, it seems to oppress us almost the same as sorrow."

Danglars looked towards Fernand, whose excitable nature received and betrayed each fresh impression.

"Why, what ails you?" asked he of Edmond. "Do you fear any approaching evil? I should say that you were the happiest man alive at this instant."

"And that is the very thing that alarms me," re-

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turned Dantes. "Man does not appear to me to be intended to enjoy felicity so unmixed; happiness is like the enchanted palaces we read of in our childhood, where fierce, fiery dragons defend the entrance and approach, and monsters of all shapes and kinds, requiring to be overcome, ere victory is ours. I own that I am lost in wonder to find myself promoted to an honor of which I feel myself unworthy—that of being the husband of Mercedes."

"Nay, nay!" cried Caderousse, smiling, "you have not attained that honor yet. Mercedes is not yet your wife. Just assume the tone and manner of a husband, and see how she will remind you that your hour is not yet come!"

The bride blushed, and seemed half inclined to be angry; while Fernand, restless and uneasy, seemed to start at every fresh sound, occasionally applying his handkerchief to his brow to wipe away the large drops of perspiration that gathered almost as soon as they were removed.

"Well, never mind that, neighbor Caderousse; it is not worth while to contradict me for such a trifle as that. 'Tis true, that Mercedes is not actually my wife; but," added he, drawing out his watch, "in an hour and a half from this she will be as fast and firm as holy church can make her."

A general exclamation of surprise ran round the table, with the exception of the elder Dantes, whose laugh displayed the still perfect beauty of his large white teeth. Mercedes looked pleased and gratified. Fernand grasped the handle of his knife with a convulsive clutch.

"In an hour?" inquired Danglars, turning pale. "How is that, my friend?"

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"Why, thus it is," replied Dantes. "Thanks to the influence of M. Morrel, to whom, next to my father, I owe every blessing I enjoy, every difficulty has been removed. We have purchased permission to waive the usual delay, and at half-past two o'clock the mayor of Marseilles will be waiting for us at the Hotel de Ville. Now, as a quarter-past one has already struck, I do not consider I have asserted too much in saying that in another hour and thirty minutes Mercedes will have become Madame Dantes."

Fernand closed his eyes; a burning sensation passed across his brow, and he was compelled to support himself by the table to prevent falling from his chair; but in spite of all his efforts, he could not refrain from uttering a deep groan, which, however, was lost amid the noisy felicitations of the company.

"Upon my word," cried the old man, "you make quick work of these kind of affairs. Arrived here only yesterday morning and married to-day at three o'clock! Commend me to a sailor for going the quick way to work!"

"But," asked Danglars in a timid tone, "how did you manage about the other formalities; the contract—the settlement?"

"Oh, bless you!" answered Dantes, "laughingly, "our papers were soon drawn up. Mercedes has no fortune; I have none to settle on her. So, you see, our papers were quickly written out, and certainly do not come very expensive."

This joke excited a fresh burst of applause.

"So that what we presumed to be merely the betrothal feast turns out to be the actual wedding dinner?" said Danglars.

"No! no!" answered Dantes; "don't imagine I am

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going to put you off in that shabby manner. To-morrow morning I start for Paris: five days to go, and the same to return, with one day to discharge the commission intrusted to me, is all the time I shall be absent. I shall be back here by the twelfth of March, and the next day I give my real marriage-feast."

This prospect of fresh festivity redoubled the hilarity of the guests to such a degree that the elder Dantes, who at the commencement of the repast had commented upon the silence that prevailed, now found it difficult, amid the general din of voices, to obtain a moment's tranquillity in which to drink to the health and prosperity of the bride and bridegroom.

Dantes, perceiving the affectionate eagerness of his father, responded by a look of grateful pleasure, while Mercedes, whose eyes had been constantly consulting the pendule which decked the chamber, made an expressive gesture to Edmond.

Around the festive board reigned that mirthful freedom from all restraint which is usually found at the termination of social meetings, among those at least whose inferior station in the world gives them a happy dispensation from the frigid rules of etiquette: and so it was with the party now assembled. Such as at the commencement of the repast had not been able to seat themselves according to their inclination, rose unceremoniously, and exchanged their places for the more immediate proximity of some preferred individual, male or female, as the case might be. All spoke at the same time, and yet none heeded a reply, but appeared as though merely addressing their own thoughts.

The paleness of Fernand appeared to have communicated itself to Danglars. As for Fernand himself, he seemed as though undergoing the tortures of the

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damned; unable to rest, he was among the first to quit the table, and, as though seeking to avoid the hilarious mirth that rose in such deafening sounds, he continued, in utter silence, to pace the further end of the saloon.

Caderousse approached him just as Danglars, whom Fernand seemed most anxious to avoid, had joined him in a corner of the room.

"Upon my word," said Caderousse, from whose mind the friendly treatment of Dantes, united with the effect of the excellent wine he had partaken of, had effaced every feeling of envy or jealousy at Dantes' good fortune—"upon my word, Dantes is a downright good fellow, and when I see him sitting there beside his pretty wife that is so soon to be, I cannot help thinking it would have been a great pity to have served him that trick you were planning yesterday."

"Oh, there was no harm meant!" answered Danglars; "at first I certainly did feel somewhat uneasy as regarded what Fernand might be tempted to do, but when I saw how completely he had mastered his feelings, even so far as to become one of his rival's bridesmen, I knew there was no further cause for apprehension."

Caderousse looked full at Fernand—he was ghastly pale.

"Certainly," continued Danglars, "the sacrifice was no trifling one when the beauty of the bride is considered. Upon my soul, that future captain of mine is a lucky dog! Gad! I only wish he would let me take his place!"

"Shall we not set forth?" asked the sweet, silvery voice of Mercedes; "two o'clock has just struck, and you know we are expected at the Hotel de Ville in a quarter of an hour."

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"To be sure!—to be sure!" cried Dantes, eagerly quiting the table; "let us go directly!"

His words were re-echoed by the whole party, who rose with a simultaneous cheer, and commenced forming themselves into procession.

At this moment Danglars, who had been incessantly observing every change in Fernand's look and manner, perceived him stagger and fall back, with an almost convulsive spasm, against a seat placed near one of the open windows. At the same instant the ear caught a sort of indistinct sound on the stairs, followed by the measured tread of soldiers, with the clanking of swords and military accoutrements; then came a hum and buzz as of many voices, so as to deaden even the noisy mirth of the bridal party, among whom a vague feeling of curiosity and apprehension quelled every disposition to talk, and almost instantaneously the most deathlike stillness prevailed.

Nearer and nearer came those sounds of terror. Three distinct knocks, as though from the hilt of a sword, against the door, increased the fears of the before gay party. Each looked inquiringly in the countenance of his neighbor, while all wished themselves quietly and safely at home.

"I demand admittance," said a loud voice outside the room, "in the name of the law!"

As no attempt was made to prevent it, the door was opened, and a magistrate, wearing his official scarf, presented himself, followed by four soldiers and a corporal. Uneasiness now yielded to the most extreme dread on the part of those present.

"May I venture to inquire the reason of this unexpected visit?" said M. Morrel, addressing the magistrate, whom he evidently knew; "there is doubtless some mistake, easily explained."

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"If it be so," replied the magistrate, "rely upon every reparation being made; meanwhile, I am the bearer of an order of arrest, and although I most reluctantly perform the task assigned me, it must, nevertheless, be fulfilled. Who among the persons here assembled answers to the name of Edmond Dantes?"

Every eye was turned towards the individual so described, who, spite of the agitation he could not but feel, advanced with dignity, and said in a firm voice, "I am he! what is your pleasure with me?"

"Edmond Dantes," replied the magistrate, "I arrest you in the name of the law!"

"Me!" repeated Edmond, slightly changing color, "and wherefore, I pray?"

"I cannot inform you, but you will be duly acquainted with the reasons that have rendered such a step necessary at your first examination."

M. Morrel felt that further resistance or remonstrance was useless. He saw before him an officer delegated to enforce the law, and perfectly well knew that it would be as unavailing to seek pity from a magistrate decked with his official scarf as to address a petition to some cold marble effigy. Old Dantes, however, saw not all this. His paternal heart could not contemplate the idea of such an outrage as consigning his beloved child to prison amid the joys of his wedding-feast. Rushing forwards, therefore, he threw himself at the magistrate's feet, and prayed and supplicated in terms so moving, that even the officer was touched; and although firm to his duty, he kindly said, "My worthy friend, let me beg of you to calm your apprehensions. Your son has probably neglected some prescribed form or attention in registering his cargo, and it is more than probable he will be set at liberty directly he has given

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the information required, whether touching the health of his crew or the value of his freight."

"What is the meaning of all this?" inquired Caderousse, frowningly, of Danglars, who had assumed an air of utter surprise.

"How can I tell you?" replied he; "I am, like yourself, utterly bewildered at all that is going on, not a word of which do I understand."

Caderousse then looked around for Fernand, but he had disappeared.

The scene of the previous night now came back to his mind with startling accuracy. The painful catastrophe he had just witnessed appeared effectually to have rent away the veil which the intoxication of the evening before had raised between himself and his memory.

"So! so!" said he, in a hoarse and choking voice, to Danglars, "this, then, I suppose, is a part of the trick you were concerting yesterday? All I can say is, that if it be so, 'tis an ill turn, and well deserves to bring double evil on those who have projected it."

"Nonsense!" returned Danglars, "I tell you again I have nothing whatever to do with it; besides, you know very well that I tore the paper to pieces."

"No, you did not!" answered Caderousse; "you merely threw it by—I saw it lying in a corner."

"Hold your tongue, you fool!—what should you know about it?—why, you were drunk!"

"Where is Fernand?" inquired Caderousse.

"How do I know?" replied Danglars; "gone, as every prudent man ought to do, to look after his own affairs, most likely. Never mind where he is; let you and I go and see what is to be done for our poor friends in this their affliction."

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During this conversation Dantes, after having exchanged a cheerful shake of the hand with all his sympathizing friends, had surrendered himself to the officer sent to arrest him, merely saying, "Make yourselves quite easy, my good fellows; there is some little mistake to clear up, that's all, depend upon it, and very likely I may not have to go so far as the prison to effect that."

"Oh, to be sure!" responded Danglars, who had now approached the group, "nothing more than a mistake, I feel quite certain."

Dantes descended the staircase, preceded by the magistrate and followed by the soldiers. A carriage awaited him at the door; he got in, followed by two soldiers and the magistrate, and the vehicle drove off towards Marseilles.

"Adieu! adieu! dearest Edmond!" cried Mercedes, stretching out her arms to him from the balcony.

The prisoner, whose ready ear caught the despairing accents of his betrothed, felt as though the chill hand of death pressed on his heart, as leaning from the coach he tried to reply in cheerful tones.

"Good-bye, my sweet Mercedes!—we shall soon meet again!"

The rapid progress of the vehicle, which disappeared round one of the turnings of Fort Saint-Nicolas, prevented his adding more.

"Wait for me here, all of you!" cried M. Morrel; "I will take the first conveyance I find, and hurry to Marseilles, whence I will bring you word how all is going on."

"That's right!" exclaimed a multitude of voices, "go, and return as quickly as you can!"

This second departure was followed by a long and

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fearful state of terrified silence on the part of those who were left behind. The old father and Mercedes remained for some time apart, each absorbed in their separate griefs; but at length the two poor victims of the same blow raised their eyes, and with a simultaneous burst of feeling rushed into each other's arms.

Meanwhile Fernand made his reappearance, poured out for himself a glass of water with a trembling hand; then hastily swallowing it, went to sit down on the first vacant chair he perceived, and this was, by mere chance, placed next to the seat on which poor Mercedes had fallen, half fainting, when released from the warm and affectionate embrace of old Dantes. Instinctively Fernand drew back his chair.

"He is the cause of all this misery—I am quite sure of it," whispered Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off Fernand, to Danglars.

"I really do not think so," answered the other; "he is too stupid to imagine such a scheme. I only hope the mischief will fall upon the head of whoever wrought it."

"You don't mention those who aided and abetted the cruel deed, any more than those who advised it," said Caderousse.

"Surely," answered Danglars, "one cannot be expected to become responsible for all the idle words one may have been obliged to listen to in the course of our lives."

Meantime the subject of the arrest was being canvassed in every different form.

"What think you, Danglars," said one of the party, turning towards him, "of the late unfortunate event?"

"Why, upon my word, I know not what to say," replied he. "I think, however, that it is just possible

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Dantes may have been detected with some trifling article on board ship considered here as contraband."

"But how could he have done so, without your knowledge, Danglars, who was the ship's supercargo?"

"Why, as for that, I could only know what I was told respecting the merchandise with which the vessel was laden. I know she was loaded with cotton, and that she took in her freight at Alexandria from the magazine of M. Pastret, and at Smyrna from M. Pascal's; that is all I was obliged to know, and I beg I may not be asked for any further particulars."

"Now, I recollect!" cried the afflicted old father; "my poor boy told me yesterday he had got a small case of coffee and another of tobacco for me!"

"There, you see!" exclaimed Danglars. "Now the mischief is out; depend upon it, the custom-house people went rummaging about the ship in our absence, and discovered poor Dantes' hidden treasures."

Mercedes, however, paid no heed to this explanation of her lover's arrest. Her grief, which she had hitherto tried to restrain, now burst out in a violent fit of hysterical sobbing.

"Come, come!" said the old man, "be comforted, my poor child; there is still hope!"

"Hope!" repeated Danglars.

"Hope!" faintly murmured Fernand; but the word seemed to die away on his pale agitated lips, and a convulsive spasm passed over his countenance.

"Good news! good news!" shouted forth one of the party, stationed in the balcony on the look-out. "Here comes M. Morrel back. No doubt now we shall hear that our friend is released!"

Mercedes and the old man rushed to meet the person from whom they hoped so much; but the first glance

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of the pale, desponding countenance of M. Morrel prepared them for evil tidings.

"What news?" exclaimed a general burst of voices.

"Alas! my friends," replied M. Morrel, with a mournful shake of his head, "the thing has assumed a more serious aspect than I expected."

"Oh! indeed—indeed, sir, he is innocent!" sobbed forth Mercedes.

"That I believe!" answered M. Morrel; "but still he is charged—"

"With what?" inquired the elder Dantes.

"With being an agent of the Bonapartist faction!"

Many of my readers may be able to recollect how formidable such an accusation became in the period at which our story is dated.

A despairing cry escaped the pale lips of Mercedes, while the heart-stricken father fell listlessly into a chair, kindly placed for him by one of the pitying guests.

"Ah, Danglars!" whispered Caderousse, "you have deceived me—the trick you spoke of last night has been played off, I see; but I cannot suffer a poor old man or an innocent girl to die of grief through your fault. I am determined to tell them all about it."

"Be silent, you simpleton!" cried Danglars, grasping him by the arm, "or I will not answer even for your own safety. Who can tell whether Dantes be innocent or guilty? The vessel did touch at Elba, where he quitted it, and passed a whole day in the island. Now, should any letters or other documents of a compromising character be found upon him, will it not be taken for granted that all who uphold him are his accomplices?"

With the rapid instinct of selfishness, Caderousse readily perceived the solidity of this mode of reasoning; he gazed doubtfully, wistfully on Danglars, and then

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insensibly continued to retreat from the dangerous proximity in which he found himself.

"Suppose we wait a while, and see what comes of it?" said he, casting a bewildered look on his companion.

"To be sure!" answered Danglars. "Let us wait, by all means! If he be innocent, of course he will be set at liberty; if guilty, why it is no use involving ourselves in his conspiracy."

"Then let us go hence. I cannot stay to endure the sight of that old man's distress."

"With all my heart!" replied Danglars, but too pleased to find a partner in his retreat. "Let us take ourselves out of the way, and leave every one else to do the same thing, if they please."

After their departure, Fernand, who had now again become the only friend and protector poor Mercedes could find in this trying hour, led the weeping girl back to her home, which she had quitted with such different hopes and feelings in the morning, while some friends of Dantes conducted the poor, heart-broken parent to his childless and dreary abode.

The rumor of Edmond's arrest as a Bonapartist agent was not slow in circulating throughout the city.

"Could you ever have credited such a thing, my dear Danglars?" asked M. Morrel, as, on his return to the port for the purpose of gleaning fresh tidings of Dantes, he overtook his supercargo and Caderousse. "Could you have believed such a thing possible?"

"Why, you know I told you," replied Danglars, "that I considered the circumstance of his having anchored in the Isle of Elba as a very suspicious circumstance."

"And did you mention these suspicions to any person besides myself?"

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"Certainly not," returned Danglars. Then added, in a low whisper, "You understand that, on account of your uncle, M. Policar Morrel, who served under the other government, and who does not altogether conceal what he thinks on the subject, you are strongly suspected of regretting the abdication of Napoleon. I should have feared to injure both Edmond and yourself had I divulged my own apprehensions to a soul. I am too well aware that, though a subordinate like myself is bound to acquaint the shipowner with everything that occurs, there are many things he ought most carefully to conceal from all else."

"'Tis well, Danglars—'tis well!" replied M. Morrel. "You are a worthy fellow, and I had already thought of your interests in the event of poor Edmond having become captain of the 'Pharaoh.'"

"Is it possible you were so kind?"

"Yes, indeed: I had previously inquired of Dantes what was his opinion of you, and if he should have any reluctance to continue you in your post, for somehow I have perceived a sort of coolness between you two that led me to believe that he would rather have another in your place as supercargo."

"And what was his reply?"

"That he certainly did think he had given you offence in an affair which he merely referred to without entering into particulars, but that whoever possessed the good opinion and confidence of the ship's owners would have his preference also."

"The hypocrite!" murmured Danglars, between his teeth.

"Poor Dantes!" said Caderousse. "No one can deny his being a noble-hearted young fellow."

"But in the midst of all our trouble," continued M.

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Morrel, "we must not forget that the 'Pharaoh' has at present no captain."

"Oh!" replied Danglars, "since we cannot leave this port for the next three months, let us hope that ere the expiration of that period Dantes will be set at liberty."

"Of that I entertain no doubt; but, in the mean time, what are we to do?"

"I am entirely at your service, M. Morrel," answered Danglars. "You know that I am as capable of managing a ship as the most experienced captain in the service; and it will be so far advantageous to you to accept my services that, upon Edmond's release from prison, no further change will be requisite on board the 'Pharaoh' than for Dantes and myself each to resume our respective posts."

"Thanks! thanks! my good friend, for your excellent idea and acceptable proposition—that will smooth all difficulties. I fully authorize you at once to assume command of the 'Pharaoh,' and look carefully to the unloading of her freight. Private misfortunes must never induce us to neglect public affairs."

"Depend upon my zeal and attention, M. Morrel; but when do you think it likely we may be permitted to visit our poor friend in his prison?"

"I will let you know that directly. I have seen M. de Villefort, whom I shall endeavor to interest in Edmond's favor. I am aware he is a furious royalist; but, spite of that, and of his being the king's procureur, he is a man like ourselves, and I fancy not a bad sort of one!"

"Perhaps not," replied Danglars; "but he is universally spoken of as extremely ambitious, and ambition is a sore hardener of hearts!"

"Well, well!" returned M. Morrel, "we shall see! But now hasten on board; I will join you there ere long."

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So saying, the worthy shipowner quitted the two allies, and proceeded in the direction of the Palais de Justice.

"You see," said Danglars, addressing Caderousse, "the turn things have taken. Do you still feel any desire to stand up in his defence?"

"Not the slightest! But yet it seems to me a shocking thing a mere joke should lead to such fruitful consequences."

"But who perpetrated that joke? let me ask; neither you nor myself, but Fernand; you know very well that I threw the paper into a corner of the room—indeed I fancied I had destroyed it."

"Oh, no!" replied Caderousse; "that I can answer for, you did not. I only wish I could see it now as plainly as I saw it lying all crushed and crumpled in a corner of the arbor."

"Well, then, if you did, depend upon it, Fernand picked it up, and either copied it, or caused it to be copied; perhaps, even, he did not take the trouble of recopying it. And now I think of it, by heavens! he has sent the letter itself! Fortunately, for me, the handwriting was disguised."

"Then you were aware of Dantes being engaged in a conspiracy?"

"Not I. As I before said, I thought the whole thing was a joke, nothing more. It seems, however, that I have unconsciously stumbled upon the truth."

"Still," argued Caderousse, "I would give a great deal if nothing of the kind had happened; or, at least, that I had had no hand in it. You will see, Danglars, that it will turn out an unlucky job for both of us."

"Nonsense! If any harm comes of it, it should fall on the guilty person; and that, you know, is Fernand.

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How can we be implicated in any way? All we have got to do is, to keep our own counsel and remain perfectly quiet, not breathing a word to any living soul; and you will see that the storm will pass away without in the least affecting us."

"Amen!" responded Caderousse, waving his hand in token of adieu to Danglars, and bending his steps toward the Allees de Meillan, moving his head to and fro, and muttering as he went, after the manner of one whose mind was overcharged with one absorbing idea.

"So far, then," said Danglars, mentally, "all has gone as I would have it! I am temporarily commander of the 'Pharaoh,' with the certainty of being permanently so, if that fool of a Caderousse can be persuaded to hold his tongue. My only fear is the chance of Dantes being released. But, bah! he is in the hands of justice, and," added he, with a smile, "she will take her own."

So saying, he leaped into a boat, desiring to be rowed on board the "Pharaoh," where M. Morrel had appointed to meet him.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPUTY PROCUREUR DU ROI.

In one of the large aristocratical mansions situated in the Rue du Grand Cours, opposite the fountain of Medusa, a second marriage-feast was being celebrated almost at the same hour with the ill-fated nuptial repast given by Dantes.

In this case, however, although the occasion of the entertainment was similar, the company assembled formed a striking difference. Instead of a rude mixture of sailors, soldiers, and those belonging to the humblest grade of life, the present *reunion* was composed of the very flower and *elite* of Marseilles society. Magistrates who had resigned their office during the usurper's reign; officers who, scorning to fight under his banners, had offered their services to foreign powers, with younger members of the family brought up to hate and execrate the man whom five years of exile would have converted into a martyr, and fifteen of restoration elevated to the rank of a demigod.

The guests were still at table, and the heated and energetic conversation that prevailed betrayed the violent and vindictive passions that then agitated each dweller of the south, where, unhappily, religious strife had long given increased bitterness to the violence of party feeling.

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The emperor—now king of the petty Isle of Elba, after having held sovereign sway over one-half of the world, counting us, his subjects, a small population of twenty millions—after having been accustomed to hear the "*Vive Napoleons*" of at least six times that number of human beings uttered in nearly every language of the globe—was looked upon among the *haute société* of Marseilles as a ruined man separated forever from any fresh connection with France, or claim to her throne.

The magistrates freely discussed their political views; the military part of the company talked unreservedly of Moscow and Leipsic, while the females indulged in open comments upon the divorce of the Empress Josephine.

All seemed to evince that in this focus of royalism it was not over the downfall of one man they rejoiced, but in the bright and cheering prospect of a revivified political existence for themselves.

An old man, decorated with the cross of St. Louis, now arose and proposed the health of King Louis XVIII.

This aged individual was the Marquis de Saint-Meran.

This toast, recalling at once the patient exile of Hartwell, and the peace-loving King of France, excited universal enthusiasm; glasses were elevated in the air *à l'Anglais;* and the ladies, snatching their bouquets from their fair bosoms, strewed the table with their floral treasures. In a word, an almost poetical fervor prevailed.

"Ah!" said the Marquise de Saint-Meran, a woman with a stern, forbidding eye, though still noble and elegant looking, despite her having reached her fiftieth year—"Ah! these revolutionists who have driven us from those very possessions they afterwards purchased for a mere trifle during the Reign of Terror, would be compelled to own, were they here, that all true devotion

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was on our side, since we were content to follow the fortunes of a fallen monarch, while they, on the contrary, made their fortune by worshipping the rising sun: yes, yes, they could not help admitting that the king, for whom we sacrificed rank, wealth, and station, was truly our 'Louis the Well-beloved!' while their wretched usurper has been, and ever will be, to them their evil genius, their 'Napoleon the Accursed!' Am I not right, Villefort?"

"I beg your pardon, madame! I really must pray you to excuse me—but, in truth, I was not attending to the conversation."

"Marquise!—marquise," interposed the same elderly personage who had proposed the toast, "let the young people alone; let me tell you, on one's wedding-day there are more agreeable subjects of conversation than dry politics!"

"Never mind, dearest mother," said a young and lovely girl, with a profusion of light brown hair, and eyes that seemed to float in liquid crystal, "'tis all my fault for seizing upon M. de Villefort, so as to prevent his listening to what you said. But there—now take him—he is all your own, for as long as you like. M. Villefort, I beg to remind you, my mother speaks to you."

"If madame la marquise will deign to repeat the words I but imperfectly caught, I shall be delighted to answer," said M. de Villefort.

"Never mind, Renee," replied the marquise, with such a look of tenderness, as all were astonished to see her harsh, dry features capable of expressing; for however all other feelings may be withered in a woman's nature, there is always one bright, smiling spot in the maternal breast, and that is where a dearly beloved child is concerned; "I forgive you. What I was saying, Villefort,

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was, that the Bonapartists had neither our sincerity, enthusiasm, nor devotion."

"They had, however, what supplied the place of those fine qualities," replied the young man, "and that was fanaticism. Napoleon is the Mahomet of the West, and is worshipped by his commonplace but ambitious followers, not only as a leader and law-giver, but also as the personification of equality."

"He!" cried the marquise—"Napoleon the type of equality! for mercy's sake, then, what would you call Robespierre? Come, come, do not strip the latter of his just rights to bestow them on one who has usurped enough, methinks."

"Nay, madame! I would place each of these heroes on his right pedestal—that of Robespierre to be built where his scaffold was erected; that of Napoleon on the column of the Place Vendome. The only difference consists in the opposite character of the equality supported by these two men; the one advocates the equality that elevates, the other professes the equality that depresses—the one brings a king within reach of the guillotine, the other elevates the people to a level with the throne. Observe," said Villefort, smiling, "I do not mean to deny, that both the individuals we have been referring to were revolutionary scoundrels and that the 9th Thermidor and 4th of April were lucky days for France, worthy of being gratefully remembered by every friend to monarchy and civil order; and that explains how it comes to pass that, fallen as I trust he is forever, Napoleon has still preserved a train of parasitical satellites. Still, marquise, it has been so with other usurpers; Cromwell, for instance, who was not half so bad as Napoleon, had his partisans and advocates."

"Do you know, Villefort, that you are talking in a

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most revolutionary strain? But I excuse it—it is impossible to expect the son of a Girondin to be free from a small spice of the old leaven."

A deep crimson suffused the countenance of Villefort.

"'Tis true, madame," answered he, "that my father was a Girondin, but he was not among the number of those who voted for the king's death; he was an equal sufferer with yourself during the Reign of Terror, and had well-nigh lost his head on the same scaffold as your own father."

"True!" replied the marquise, without wincing in the slightest degree at the tragical remembrance thus called up; "but bear in mind, if you please, that our respective parents underwent persecution and proscription from diametrically opposite principles; in proof of which I may remark that while my family remained among the stanchest adherents of the exiled princes your father lost no time in joining the new government; and that after the Citizen Noirtier had become a Girondin, the Count Noirtier appeared as a senator and statesman."

"Dear mother!" interposed Renee, "you know very well it was agreed that all these disagreeable reminiscences should forever be laid aside."

"Suffer me, also, to add my earnest request that you will kindly allow the veil of oblivion to cover and conceal the past. What avails retrospection and recrimination touching circumstances wholly past recall? For my own part I have laid aside even the name of my father, and altogether disown his political principles. He was—nay, probably may still be—a Bonapartist, and is called Noirtier; I, on the contrary, am a stanch loyalist, and style myself De Villefort. Let what may remain of revolutionary sap exhaust itself and die away with the old trunk, and condescend only to regard the

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young shoot which has started up at a distance from the parent tree, without having the power, any more than the wish, to separate entirely from the stock from which it sprung."

"Bravo, Villefort!" cried the marquis; "excellently well said! Come now, I have hopes of obtaining what I have been for years endeavoring to persuade the marquise to promise—namely, a perfect amnesty, and forgetfulness of the past."

"With all my heart!" replied the marquise; "let the past be forever forgotten! I promise you, it affords *me* as little pleasure to revive it as it does you. All I ask is, that Villefort will be firm and inflexible for the future in marking his political principles. Remember also, Villefort, that we have pledged ourselves to his majesty for your fealty and strict loyalty, and that at our recommendation, the king consented to forget the past as I do" (and here she extended to him her hand), "as I now do at your entreaty. But bear in mind, that should there fall in your way any one guilty of conspiring against the government, you will be so much the more bound to visit the offence with rigorous punishment, as it is known you belong to a suspected family."

"Alas, madame," returned Villefort, "my profession, as well as the times in which we live, compel me to be severe. I have already successfully conducted several public prosecutions, and brought the offenders to merited punishment. But we have not done with the thing yet."

"Do you indeed think so?" inquired the marquise.

"I am, at least, fearful of it. Napoleon in the Island of Elba is too near France, and his proximity keeps up the hopes of his partisans. Marseilles is filled with half-pay officers, who are daily, under one frivolous pretext

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or other, getting up quarrels with the royalists; from hence arise continual and fatal duels among the higher classes of persons, and assassinations in the lower."

"You have heard, perhaps," said the Count de Salvieux, one of M. de Saint-Meran's oldest friends, and chamberlain to the Count d'Artois, "that the Holy Alliance purpose removing him from thence?"

"Ah! they were talking about it when we left Paris, said M. de Saint-Meran; "and where is it decided to transfer him?"

"To Saint Helena."

"For heaven's sake, where is that?" asked the marquise.

"An island situated on the other side of the equator, at least two thousand leagues from hence," replied the count.

"So much the better! As Villefort observes, it is a great act of folly to have left such a man between Corsica, where he was born, Naples, of which his brother-in-law is king, and Italy, the sovereignty of which he coveted for his son."

"Well," said the marquise, "it seems probable that, by the aid of the Holy Alliance, we shall be rid of Napoleon; and we must trust to the vigilance of M. de Villefort to purify Marseilles of his partisans. The king is either a king or no king; if he be acknowledged sovereign of France, he should be upheld in peace and tranquillity, and this can best be effected by employing the most inflexible agents to put down every attempt at conspiracy—'tis the best and surest means of preventing mischief."

"Unfortunately, madame," answered Villefort, "the strong arm of the law is not called upon to interfere until the evil has taken place."

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"Then all he has got to do is to endeavor to repair it."

"Nay, madame, the law is frequently powerless to effect this; all it can do is to avenge the wrong done."

"Oh! M. de Villefort," cried a beautiful young creature, daughter to Count Salvieux, and the cherished friend of Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran—"do try and get up some famous trial while we are at Marseilles. I never was in a law-court; I am told it is so very amusing!"

"Amusing, certainly!" replied the young man, "inasmuch as, instead of shedding tears as at the fictitious tale of woe produced at a theatre, you behold in a law-court a case of real and genuine distress—a drama of life. The prisoner whom you see there, pale, agitated, and alarmed, instead of—as is the case when the curtain falls on a tragedy—going home to sup peacefully with his family, and then retiring to rest, that he may recommence his mimic woes on the morrow, is removed from your sight merely to be reconducted to his prison, and delivered up to the executioner. I leave you to judge how far your nerves are calculated to bear you through such a scene. Of this, however, be assured, that should any favorable opportunity present itself, I will not fail to offer you the choice of being present at it."

"For shame, M. de Villefort!" said Renee, becoming quite pale; "don't you see how you are frightening us?—and yet you laugh."

"Why, I stand almost in the light of one engaged in a duel. I have already recorded sentence of death, five or six times, against the movers of political conspiracies, and who can say how many daggers may be ready sharpened, and only waiting a favorable opportunity to be buried in my heart?"

"Gracious heavens! M. de Villefort," said Renee,

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becoming more and more terrified; "you surely are not in earnest."

"Indeed I am," replied the young magistrate, with a smile; "and in the interesting trial that young lady is anxious to witness, the case would only be still more aggravated. Suppose, for instance, the prisoner, as is more than probable, to have served under Napoleon—well, can you expect for an instant that one accustomed, at the word of his commander, to rush fearlessly on the very bayonets of his foe, will scruple more to drive a stiletto into the heart of one he knows to be his personal enemy than to slaughter his fellow-creatures, merely because he is bidden to do so by one he is bound to obey? Besides, one requires the excitement of being hateful in the eyes of the accused, in order to lash one's-self into a state of sufficient vehemence and power. I would not choose to see the man against whom I pleaded smile as though in mockery of my words. No! my pride is to see the accused pale, agitated, and as though beaten out of all composure by the fire of my eloquence."

"Bravo!" cried one of the guests, "that is what I call talking to some purpose."

"Just the person we require at a time like the present," said a second.

"What a splendid business that last cause of yours was, my dear Villefort," remarked a third. "I mean the trial of the man for murdering his father. Upon my word, you killed him ere the executioner had laid his hands upon him."

"Oh! as for parricides, and such dreadful people as that," interposed Renee, "it matters very little what is done to them; but as regards poor unfortunate creatures whose only crime consists in having mixed themselves up in political intrigues—"

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"Why, that is the very worst offence they could possibly commit; for, don't you see, Renee, the king is the father of his people, and he who should plot or contrive aught against the life and safety of the parent of thirty-two millions of souls is a parricide upon a fearfully great scale."

"I don't know anything about that," replied Renee; "but, M. de Villefort, you have promised—have you not?—always to show mercy to those I plead for."

"Make yourself quite easy on that point," answered Villefort, with one of his sweetest smiles; "you and I will always consult upon our verdicts."

"My love," said the marquise, "attend to your doves, your lapdogs, and embroidery, but do not meddle with what you understand not. Nowadays the military profession has rest, and its brave sons repose under their well-earned laurels. Now is the time for those of the long robe, like M. de Villefort, to achieve a splendid notoriety; seek not, therefore, to cross the brilliant career your betrothed husband may otherwise pursue."

"Well," said Renee, "I cannot help regretting you had not chosen some other profession than your own—a physician, for instance. Do you know I always felt a shudder at the idea of even a *destroying* angel?"

"Dear, good Renee!" whispered Villefort, as he gazed with unutterable tenderness on the lovely speaker.

"Let us hope, my child," cried the marquis, "that M. de Villefort may prove the moral and political physician of this province. If so, he will have achieved a noble work."

"And one which will go far to efface the recollection of his father's conduct," added the incorrigible marquise.

"Madame," replied Villefort, with a mournful smile, "I have already had the honor to observe that my father

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has (at least I hope so) abjured his past errors, and that he is at the present moment a firm and zealous friend to religion and order; a better royalist, possibly, than his son, for he has to atone for past dereliction, while I have no other impulse than warm, decided preference and conviction."

Having made this well-turned speech, Villefort looked carefully round to mark the effect of his oratory, such as he would have done had he been addressing the bench in open court.

"Do you know, my dear Villefort," cried the Count de Salvieux, "that is as nearly as possible what I myself said the other day at the Tuileries, when questioned by his majesty's principal chamberlain, touching the singularity of an alliance between the son of a Girondin and the daughter of an officer of the Duke de Conde; and I assure you he seemed fully to comprehend that this mode of reconciling political differences was based upon sound and excellent principles. Then the king, who, without our suspecting it, had overheard our conversation, interrupted us by saying, 'Villefort'—observe that the king did not pronounce the word Noirtier, but on the contrary placed considerable emphasis on that of Villefort—'Villefort,' said his majesty, 'is a young man of great judgment and discretion, who will be sure to make a figure in his profession. I like him very much, and it gave me great pleasure to hear that he was about to become the son-in-law of M. le Marquis and Madame la Marquise de Saint-Meran. I should myself have recommended the match had not the noble marquis anticipated my wishes by requesting my consent to it.'"

"Is it possible the king could have condescended so far as to express himself so favorably of me?" asked the enraptured Villefort.

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"I give you his very words; and if the marquis chooses to be candid, he will confess that they perfectly agree with what his majesty said to him when he went (six months ago) to consult him upon the subject of your espousing his daughter."

"Certainly," answered the marquis, "you state but the truth."

"How much do I owe this gracious prince! What is there I would not do to evince my earnest gratitude?"

"That is right," cried the marquise. "I love to see you thus. Now, then, were a conspirator to fall into your hands, he would be most welcome."

"For my part, dear mother," interposed Renee, "I trust your wishes will not prosper, and that Providence will only permit petty offenders, poor debtors, and miserable cheats to fall into M. de Villefort's hands, then I shall be contented."

"Just the same as though you prayed that a physician might only be called upon to prescribe for headaches, measles, and the stings of wasps, or any other slight affection of the epidermis. If you wish to see me the king's procureur, you must desire for me some of those violent and dangerous diseases, from the cure of which so much honor redounds to the physician."

At this moment, and as though the utterance of Villefort's wish had sufficed to effect its accomplishment, a servant entered the room, and whispered a few words in his ear. Villefort immediately rose from the table and quitted the room, upon the plea of urgent business: he soon, however, returned, his whole face beaming with delight.

Renee regarded him with fond affection; and certainly his handsome features, lit up, as they then were, with more than usual fire and animation, seemed formed to

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excite the innocent admiration with which she gazed on her graceful and intelligent lover.

"You were wishing just now," said Villefort, addressing her, "that I were a doctor instead of a lawyer. Well, I at least resemble the disciples of Esculapius in one thing, that of not being able to call a day my own, not even that of my betrothal."

"And wherefore were you called away just now?" asked Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran, with an air of deep interest.

"For a very serious affair, which bids well to afford our executioner here some work."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Renee, her cheeks, that were before glowing with emotion, becoming pale as marble.

"Is it possible?" burst simultaneously from all who were near enough to the magistrate to hear his words.

"Why, if my information prove correct, a sort of Bonapartist conspiracy has just been discovered."

"Can I believe my ears?" cried the marquise.

"I will read you the letter containing the accusation, at least," said Villefort:

"The procureur du roi is informed by a friend to the throne and the religious institutions of his country, that an individual named Edmond Dantes, second in command on board the 'Pharaoh,' this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto Ferrajo, has been the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and again taken charge of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantes, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father's abode. Should it not be found in the possession of father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantes on board the Pharaoh.'"

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"But," said Renee, "this letter, which, after all, is but an anonymous scrawl, is not even addressed to you, but to the procureur du roi."

"True; but that gentleman being absent, his secretary, by his orders, opened his letters; thinking this one of importance, he sent for me, but not finding me, took upon himself to give the necessary orders for arresting the accused party."

"Then the guilty person is absolutely in custody?" said the marquise.

"Nay, dear mother, say the accused person. You know we cannot yet pronounce him guilty."

"He is in safe custody," answered Villefort; "and rely upon it, if the letter alluded to is found, he will not be likely to be trusted abroad again, unless he goes forth under the especial protection of the headsman."

"And where is the unfortunate being?" asked Renee.

"He is at my house!"

"Come, come, my friend," interrupted the marquis, "do not neglect your duty to linger with us. You are the king's servant, and must go whithersoever that service calls you."

"Oh, Villefort!" cried Renee, clasping her hands, and looking towards her lover with piteous earnestness, "be merciful on this the day of our betrothal."

The young man passed round to the side of the table where the fair pleader sat, and leaning over her chair, said tenderly:

"To give you pleasure, my sweet Renee, I promise to show all the lenity in my power; but if the charges brought against this Bonapartean hero prove correct, why, then, you really must give me leave to order his head to be cut off."

Renee, with an almost convulsive shudder, turned

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away her head, as though the very mention of killing a fellow-creature in cold blood was more than her tender nature could endure.

"Never mind that foolish girl, Villefort," said the marquise, "she will soon get over these things."

So saying, Madame de Saint-Meran extended her dry, bony hand to Villefort, who, while imprinting a son-in-law's respectful salute on it, looked at Renee, as much as to say, "I must try and fancy 'tis your dear hand I kiss, as it should have been."

"These are mournful auspices to accompany a betrothal!" sighed poor Renee.

"Upon my word, child!" exclaimed the angry marquise, "your folly exceeds all bounds. I should be glad to know what connection there can possibly be between your sentimentality and the affairs of state!"

"Oh, mother!" murmured Renee.

"Nay, madame, I pray you pardon this little traitor; I promise you that, to make up for her want of loyalty, I will be most inflexibly severe;" then casting an expressive glance at his betrothed, which seemed to say, "Fear not, for your dear sake my justice shall be tempered with mercy," and receiving a sweet and approving smile in return, Villefort quitted the room.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE EXAMINATION.

No sooner had Villefort left the saloon than he assumed the grave air of a man who holds the balance of life and death in his hands. Except the recollection of the line of politics his father had adopted, and which might interfere, unless he acted with the greatest prudence, with his own career, Villefort was as happy as a man could be. Already rich, he held a high official situation, though only twenty-seven. He was about to marry a young and charming woman, and besides her personal attractions, which were very great, Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran's family possessed considerable political influence, which they would, of course, exert in his favor. The dowry of his wife amounted to six thousand pounds, besides the prospect of inheriting twenty thousand more at her father's death.

At the door he met the commissary of police, who was waiting for him. The sight of this officer recalled Villefort from the third heaven to earth; he composed his face as we have before described, and said, "I have read the letter, monsieur, and you have acted rightly in arresting this man; now inform me what you have discovered concerning him and the conspiracy."

"We know nothing as yet of the conspiracy, monsieur; all the papers found have been sealed up and

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placed on your bureau. The prisoner himself is named Edmond Dantes, mate on board the three-master 'Pharaoh,' trading in cotton with Alexandria and Smyrna, and belonging to Morrel & Son, of Marseilles."

"Before he entered the navy had he ever served in the marines?"

"Oh, no, monsieur, he is very young."

"How old?"

"Nineteen or twenty, at the most."

At this moment, and as Villefort had arrived at the corner of the Rue des Conseils, a man, who seemed to have been waiting for him, approached: it was M. Morrel.

"Ah, M. de Villefort," cried he, "I am delighted to see you. Some of your people have committed the strangest mistake—they have just arrested Edmond Dantes, the mate of my ship."

"I know it, monsieur," replied Villefort, "and I am now going to examine him."

"Oh," said Morrel, carried away by his friendship, "you do not know him, and I do. He is the most estimable, the most trustworthy creature in the world, and I will venture to say, there is not a better seaman in all the merchant-service. Oh, M. de Villefort, I beseech your indulgence for him."

Villefort, as we have seen, belonged to the aristocratic party at Marseilles, Morrel to the plebeian; the first was a royalist, the other suspected of Bonapartism. Villefort looked disdainfully at Morrel, and replied:

"You are aware, monsieur, that a man may be estimable and trustworthy in private life, and the best seaman in the merchant-service, and yet be, politically speaking, a great criminal. Is it not true?"

The magistrate laid emphasis on these words, as if he

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wished to apply them to the owner himself, whilst his eyes seemed to plunge into the heart of him who, whilst he interceded for another, had himself need of indulgence. Morrel reddened, for his own conscience was not quite clear on politics; besides, what Dantes had told him of his interview with the grand marshal, and what the emperor had said to him, embarrassed him. He replied, however:

"I entreat you, M. de Villefort, be, as you always are, kind and equitable, and give him back to us soon."

This *give us* sounded revolutionary in the sub-prefect's ears.

"Ah! ah!" murmured he, "is Dantes, then, a member of some Carbonari society, that his protector thus employs the collective form? He was, if I recollect, arrested in a cabaret in company with a great many others."

Then he added, "Monsieur, you may rest assured I shall perform my duty impartially, and that if he be innocent you shall not have appealed to me in vain; should he, however, be guilty, in this present epoch impunity would furnish a dangerous example, and I must do my duty."

As he had now arrived at the door of his own house, which adjoined the Palais de Justice, he entered, after having saluted the shipowner, who stood, as if petrified, on the spot where Villefort had left him.

The ante-chamber was full of agents of police and gendarmes, in the midst of whom, carefully watched, but calm and smiling, stood the prisoner. Villefort traversed the ante-chamber, cast a side glance at Dantes, and taking a packet which a gendarme offered him, disappeared, saying, "Bring in the prisoner."

Rapid as had been Villefort's glance, it had served to give him an idea of the man he was about to interro-

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gate. He had recognized intelligence in the high forehead, courage in the dark eyes and bent brow, and frankness in the thick lips that showed a set of pearly teeth.

Villefort's first impression was favorable, but he had been so often warned to mistrust first impulses that he applied the maxim to the impression, forgetting the difference between the two words. He stifled, therefore, the feelings of compassion that were rising, composed his features, and sat down at his bureau. An instant after Dantes entered.

He was pale, but calm and collected, and saluting his judge with easy politeness, looked round for a seat, as if he had been in the saloon of M. Morrel.

It was then that he encountered, for the first time, Villefort's look, that look peculiar to justice; which, whilst it seems to read the culprit's thoughts, betrays nought of its own.

"Who and what are you?" demanded Villefort, turning over a pile of papers containing information relative to the prisoner that an agent of police had given to him on his entry.

"My name is Edmond Dantes," replied the young man calmly. "I am mate of the 'Pharaoh,' belonging to Messrs. Morrel & Son."

"Your age?" continued Villefort.

"Nineteen," returned Dantes.

"What were you doing at the moment you were arrested?"

"I was at the festival of my marriage, monsieur," said the young man, his voice slightly tremulous, so great was the contrast between that happy moment and the painful ceremony he was now undergoing; so great was the contrast between the sombre aspect of M. de Villefort and the radiant face of Mercedes.

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"You were at the festival of your marriage?" said the deputy, shuddering in spite of himself.

"Yes, monsieur, I am on the point of marrying a young girl I have been attached to for three years."

Villefort, impassive as he was, was struck with this coincidence; and the tremulous voice of Dantes, surprised in the midst of his happiness, struck a sympathetic chord in his own bosom; he also was on the point of being married, and he was summoned from his own happiness to destroy that of another.

This philosophic reflection, thought he, will make a great sensation at M. de Saint-Meran's, and he arranged mentally, whilst Dantes awaited further questions, the antitheses by which orators often create a reputation for eloquence.

When this speech was arranged, Villefort turned to Dantes.

"Continue, sir," said he.

"What would you have me continue?"

"To give all the information in your power."

"Tell me on which point you desire information, and I will tell all I know; only," added he, with a smile, "I warn you I know very little."

"Have you ever served under the usurper?"

"I was about to be incorporated in the royal marines when he fell."

"It is reported your political opinions are extreme," said Villefort, who had never heard anything of the kind, but was not sorry to make this inquiry as if it were an accusation.

"My political opinions!" replied Dantes. "Alas! sir, I never had any opinions. I am hardly nineteen; I know nothing; I have no part to play. If I obtain the situation I desire, I shall owe it to M. Morrel. Thus all my

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opinions—I will not say public, but private—are confined to these three sentiments: I love my father, I respect M. Morrel, and I adore Mercedes. This, sir, is all I can tell you, and you see how uninteresting it is."

As Dantes spoke, Villefort gazed at his ingenuous and open countenance, and recollected the words of Renee, who, without knowing who the culprit was, had besought his indulgence for him. With the deputy's knowledge of crime and criminals, every word the young man uttered convinced him more and more of his innocence.

This lad, for he was scarcely a man, simple, natural, eloquent with that eloquence of the heart never found when sought for, full of affection for everybody, because he was happy, and because happiness renders even the wicked good, extended his affection even to his judge, spite of Villefort's severe look and stern accent. Dantes seemed full of kindness.

"*Pardieu!*" said Villefort; "he is a noble fellow! I hope I shall gain Renee's favor easily by obeying the first command she ever imposed on me. I shall have at least a pressure of the hand in public and a sweet kiss in private."

Full of this idea, Villefort's face became so joyous, that when he turned to Dantes, the latter, who had watched the change on his physiognomy, was smiling also.

"Sir," said Villefort, "have you any enemies—at least, that you know?"

"Have I enemies?" replied Dantes; "my position is not sufficiently elevated for that. As for my character, that is, perhaps, somewhat too hasty, but I have striven to repress it. I have had ten or twelve sailors under me; and if you question them, they will tell you that they

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love and respect me, not as a father, for I am too young, but as an elder brother."

"But instead of enemies, you may have excited jealousy. You are about to become captain at nineteen, an elevated post; you are about to marry a pretty girl, who loves you, and these two pieces of good fortune may have excited the envy of some one."

"You are right; you know men better than I do, and what you say may possibly be the case. I confess I prefer not knowing them, because then I should be forced to hate them."

"You are wrong; you should always strive to see clearly around you. You seem a worthy young man; I will depart from the strict line of my duty to aid you in discovering the author of this accusation. Here is the paper; do you know the writing?"

As he spoke, Villefort drew the letter from his pocket, and presented it to Dantes. Dantes read it. A cloud passed over his brow as he said:

"No, monsieur, I do not know the writing, and yet it is tolerably plain. Whoever did it writes well. I am very fortunate," added he, looking gratefully at Villefort, "to be examined by such a man as you, for this envious person is a real enemy."

And by the rapid glance that the young man's eyes shot forth, Villefort saw how much energy lay hidden beneath this mildness.

"Now," said the deputy, "answer me frankly, not as a prisoner to a judge, but as one man to another, who takes an interest in him, what truth is there in the accusation contained in this anonymous letter?"

And Villefort threw disdainfully on his bureau the letter Dantes had just given back to him.

"None at all. I will tell you the real facts. I swear

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by my honor as a sailor, by my love for Mercedes—by the life of my father—"

"Speak, monsieur," said Villefort. Then internally, "If Renee could see me, I hope she would be satisfied, and would no longer call me a decapitator."

"Well, when we quitted Naples, Captain Leclere was attacked with a brain-fever. As we had no doctor on board, and he was so anxious to arrive at Elba that he would not touch at any other port, his disorder rose to such a height, that at the end of the third day, feeling that he was dying, he called me to him. 'My dear Dantes,' said he, 'swear to perform what I am going to tell you, for it is a matter of the deepest importance.'

"'I swear, captain,' replied I.

"'Well, as after my death the command devolves on you as mate, assume the command, and bear up for the Isle of Elba, disembark at Porto-Ferrajo, ask for the grand marshal, give him this letter, perhaps they will give you another letter and charge you with a commission. You will accomplish what I wish to have done, and derive all the honor and profit from it.'

"' I will do it, captain; but, perhaps, I shall not be admitted to the grand marshal's presence as easily as you expect?'

"'Here is a ring that will obtain audience of him, and remove every difficulty,' said the captain.

"At these words he gave me a ring.

"It was time: two hours after he was delirious; the next day he died."

"And what did you do then?"

"What I ought to have done, and what every one would have done in my place. Everywhere the last requests of a dying man are sacred; but amongst sailors the last requests of his superior are commands. I

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sailed for the Isle of Elba, where I arrived the next day; I ordered everybody to remain on board, and went on shore alone. As I had expected, I found some difficulty in obtaining access to the grand marshal; but I sent the ring I had received from the captain to him, and was instantly admitted. He questioned me concerning Captain Leclere's death; and, as the latter told me, gave me a letter to carry to a person in Paris. I undertook it, because it was what my captain bade me do. I landed here, regulated the affairs of the vessel, and hastened to visit my affianced bride, whom I found more lovely than ever. Thanks to M. Morrel, all the forms were got over; in a word, I was, as I told you, at my marriage feast, and I should have been married in an hour, and to-morrow I intended to start for Paris."

"Ah!" said Villefort, "this seems to me the truth. If you have been culpable it was imprudence, and this imprudence was legitimized by the orders of your captain. Give up this letter you have brought from Elba, and pass your word you will appear should you be required, and go and rejoin your friends."

"I am free, then, sir?" cried Dantes, joyfully.

"Yes; but first give me this letter."

"You have it already: for it was taken from me with some others which I see in that packet."

"Stop a moment," said the deputy, as Dantes took his hat and gloves. "To whom is it addressed?"

"To Monsieur Noirtier, Rue Coq-Heron, Paris."

Had a thunderbolt fallen into the room, Villefort could not have been more stupefied. He sank into his seat, and hastily turning over the packet, drew forth the fatal letter, at which he glanced with an expression of terror.

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"M. Noirtier, Rue Coq-Heron, No. 13," murmured he, growing still paler.

"Yes," said Dantes; "do you then know him?"

"No," replied Villefort; "a faithful servant of the king does not know conspirators."

"It is a conspiracy, then?" asked Dantes, who, after believing himself free, now began to feel a ten-fold alarm. "I have already told you, however, that I was ignorant of the contents of the letter."

"Yes, but you know the name of the person to whom it is addressed?" said Villefort.

"I was forced to read the address to know to whom to give it."

"Have you shown this letter to any one," asked Villefort, becoming still more pale.

"To no one, on my honor."

"Everybody is ignorant that you are the bearer of a letter from the Isle of Elba, and addressed to M. Noirtier?"

"Everybody, except the person who gave it to me."

"This is too much," murmured Villefort.

Villefort's brow darkened more and more, his white lips and clenched teeth filled Dantes with apprehension.

After reading the letter, Villefort covered his face with his hands.

"Oh!" said Dantes, timidly, "what is the matter?"

Villefort made no answer, but raised his head at the expiration of a few seconds, and again perused the letter.

"You give me your honor that you are ignorant of the contents of this letter?"

"I give you my honor, sir," said Dantes; "but what is the matter? You are ill; shall I ring for assistance? —shall I call?"

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"No," said Villefort, rising hastily; "stay where you are. It is for me to give orders here, and not you."

"Monsieur," replied Dantes, proudly, "it was only to summon assistance for you."

"I want none; it was a temporary indisposition. Attend to yourself; answer me."

Dantes waited, expecting a question, but in vain. Villefort fell back on his chair, passed his hands over his brow moist with perspiration, and, for the third time, read the letter.

"Oh! if he knew the contents of this!" murmured he, "and that Noirtier is the father of Villefort, I am lost." And he fixed his eyes upon Edmond as if he would have penetrated his thoughts.

"Oh! it is impossible to doubt it," cried he, suddenly.

"In Heaven's name!" cried the unhappy young man, "if you doubt me, question me; I will answer you."

Villefort made a violent effort, and in a tone he strove to render firm:

"Sir," said he, "I am no longer able, as I had hoped, to restore you immediately to liberty; before doing so I must consult the judge of instruction; but you see how I behave towards you."

"Oh! monsieur," cried Dantes, "you have been rather a friend than a judge."

"Well, I must detain you some time longer, but I will strive to make it as short as possible. The principal charge against you is this letter, and you see—"

Villefort approached the fire, cast it in, and waited until it was entirely consumed.

"You see I destroy it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Dantes, "you are goodness itself."

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Villefort and Dantes.

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"Listen," continued Villefort, "you can now have confidence in me, after what I have done."

"Oh! order me, and I will obey."

"Listen! this is not an order, but a counsel I give you."

"Speak, and I will follow your advice."

"I shall detain you until this evening in the Palais de Justice. Should any one else interrogate you, do not breathe a word of this letter."

"I promise."

It was Villefort who seemed to entreat, and the prisoner who reassured him.

"You see," continued he, "the letter is destroyed; you and I alone knew of its existence; should you therefore be questioned, deny all knowledge of it."

"Fear nothing. I will deny it."

"It was the only letter you had?"

"It was."

"Swear it."

"I swear it."

Villefort rang. An agent of police entered. Villefort whispered some words in his ear, to which the officer replied by a motion of his head.

"Follow him," said Villefort to Dantes.

Dantes saluted Villefort and retired.

Hardly had the door closed, when Villefort threw himself into a chair.

"Alas! alas!" murmured he, "if the procureur du roi had been at Marseilles, I should have been ruined. This accursed letter would have destroyed all my hopes. Oh! my father, must your past career always interfere with my successes?"

Suddenly a light passed over his face, a smile played round his mouth, and his lips became unclenched.

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"This will do," said he, "and from this letter, which might have ruined me, I will make my fortune."

And after he had assured himself the prisoner was gone, the deputy procureur hastened to the house of his bride.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHATEAU D'IF.

THE commissary of police, as he traversed the ante-chamber, made a sign to two gendarmes, who placed themselves one on Dantes' right and the other on his left. A door that communicated with the Palais de Justice was opened, and they traversed a long range of gloomy corridors, whose appearance might have made even the boldest shudder.

The Palais de Justice communicated with the prison —a sombre edifice, that from its grated windows looks on the clock-tower of the Accoules.

After numberless windings Dantes saw an iron door. The commissary knocked thrice, every blow seeming to Dantes as if struck on his heart. The door opened, the two gendarmes gently pushed him forward, and the door closed with a loud sound behind him. The air he inhaled was no longer pure, but thick and mephitic— he was in prison.

He was conducted to a tolerably neat chamber, but grated and barred, and its appearance, therefore, did not greatly alarm him; besides the words of Villefort, who seemed to interest himself so much, resounded still in his ears like a promise of freedom.

It was four o'clock when Dantes was placed in this chamber. It was, as we have said, the 1st of March, and the prisoner was soon buried in darkness.

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The obscurity augmented the acuteness of his hearing: at the slightest sound he rose and hastened to the door, convinced they were about to liberate him, but the sound died away, and Dantes sank again into his seat.

At last, about ten o'clock, and just as Dantes began to despair, steps were heard in the corridor, a key turned in the lock, the bolts creaked, the massy oaken door flew open, and a flood of light from two torches pervaded the apartment.

By the torchlight Dantes saw the glittering sabres and carbines of four gendarmes. He had advanced at first, but stopped at the sight of this fresh accession of force.

"Are you come to fetch me?" asked he.

"Yes," replied a gendarme.

"By the orders of the deputy of the king's procureur?"

"I believe so."

The conviction that they came from M. de Villefort relieved all Dantes' apprehension; he advanced calmly and placed himself in the centre of the escort.

A carriage waited at the door, the coachman was on the box, and an exempt seated beside him.

"Is this carriage for me?" said Dantes.

"It is for you," replied a gendarme.

Dantes was about to speak, but feeling himself urged forward, and having neither the power nor the intention to resist, he mounted the steps, and was in an instant seated inside, between two gendarmes; the two others took their places opposite, and the carriage rolled heavily over the stones.

The prisoner glanced at the windows,—they were grated; he had changed his prison for another that was conveying him he knew not whither. Through the

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grating, however, Dantes saw they were passing through the Rue Caisserie, and by the quay Saint-Laurent and the Rue Taramis, to the port.

The carriage stopped, the exempt descended, approached the guard-house; a dozen soldiers came out and formed themselves in order. Dantes saw the reflection of their muskets by the light of the lamps on the quay.

"Can all this force be summoned on my account?" thought he.

The exempt opened the door, which was locked, and without speaking a word answered Dantes' question, for he saw between the ranks of the soldiers a passage formed from the carriage to the port.

The two gendarmes who were opposite to him descended first, then he was ordered to alight, and the gendarmes on each side of him followed his example. They advanced towards a boat, which a custom-house officer held by a chain, near the quay.

The soldiers looked at Dantes with an air of stupid curiosity. In an instant he was placed in the stern-sheets of the boat between the gendarmes, whilst the exempt stationed himself at the bow; a shove sent the boat adrift, and four sturdy oarsmen impelled it rapidly towards the Pilon. At a shout from the boat the chain that closes the mouth of the port was lowered, and in a second they were outside the harbor.

The prisoner's first feeling was joy at again breathing the pure air, for air is freedom; but he soon sighed, for he passed before La Reserve, where he had that morning been so happy, and now through the open windows came the laughter and revelry of a ball.

Dantes folded his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed fervently.

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The boat continued her voyage. They had passed the Tete de More, were now in front of the lighthouse, and about to double the battery; this manœuvre was incomprehensible to Dantes.

"Whither are you taking me?" asked he.

"You will soon know."

"But still—"

"We are forbidden to give you any explanation."

Dantes knew that nothing would be more absurd than to question subordinates, who were forbidden to reply, and remained silent.

The most vague and wild thoughts passed through his mind. The boat they were in could not make a long voyage, there was no vessel at anchor outside the harbor; he thought, perhaps, they were going to leave him on some distant point. He was not bound, nor had they made any attempt to handcuff him; this seemed a good augury. Besides, had not the deputy who had been so kind to him told him that provided he did not pronounce the dreaded name of Noirtier, he had nothing to apprehend? Had not Villefort in his presence destroyed the fatal letter, the only proof against him? He waited silently, striving to pierce through the darkness.

They had left the Isle Ratonneau, where the lighthouse stood, on the right, and were now opposite the Point des Catalans. It seemed to the prisoner that he could distinguish a female form on the beach, for it was there Mercedes dwelt.

How was it that a presentiment did not warn Mercedes her lover was near her?

One light alone was visible, and Dantes recognized it as coming from the chamber of Mercedes. A loud cry could be heard by her. He did not utter it. What

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would his guards think if they heard him shout like a madman?

He remained silent, his eyes fixed upon the light; the boat went on, but the prisoner only thought of Mercedes. A rising ground hid the light; Dantes turned and perceived they had got out to sea. Whilst he had been absorbed in thought they had hoisted the sail.

In spite of his repugnance to address his guards, Dantes turned to the nearest gendarme, and taking his hand:

"Comrade," said he, "I adjure you as a Christian and a soldier to tell me where we are going. I am Captain Dantes, a loyal Frenchman, though accused of treason; tell me where you are conducting me, and I promise you on my honor, I will submit to my fate."

The gendarme looked irresolutely at his companion, who returned for answer a sign that said, "I see no great harm in telling him now," and the gendarme replied:

"You are a native of Marseilles and a sailor, and yet you do not know where you are going?"

"On my honor I have no idea."

"That is impossible."

"I swear to you it is true. Tell me, I entreat."

"But my orders?"

"Your orders do not forbid your telling me what I must know in ten minutes, in half an hour, or an hour. You see I cannot escape even if I intended."

"Unless you are blind, or have never been outside the harbor, you must know."

"I do not."

"Look round you then."

Dantes rose and looked forward, when he saw rise within a hundred yards of him the black and frowning

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rock on which stands the Chateau d'If. This gloomy fortress, which has for more than three hundred years furnished food for so many wild legends, seemed to Dantes like a scaffold to a malefactor.

"The Chateau d'If!" cried he; "what are we going there for?"

The gendarme smiled.

"I am not going there to be imprisoned," said Dantes: "it is only used for political prisoners. I have committed no crime. Are there any magistrates or judges at the Chateau d'If?"

"There are only," said the gendarme, "a governor, a garrison, turnkeys, and good thick walls. Come, come, do not look so astonished, or you will make me think you are laughing at me in return for my good-nature."

Dantes pressed the gendarme's hand as though he would crush it.

"You think then," said he, "that I am conducted to the chateau to be imprisoned there?"

"It is probable; but there is no occasion to squeeze so hard."

"Without any formality?"

"All the formalities have been gone through."

"In spite of M. de Villefort's promises?"

"I do not know what M. de Villefort promised you," said the gendarme, "but I know we are taking you to the Chateau d'If. But what are you doing? Help! comrades, help!"

By a rapid movement, which the gendarme's practised eye had perceived, Dantes sprang forward to precipitate himself into the sea, but four vigorous arms seized him as his feet quitted the flooring of the boat. He fell back foaming with rage.

"Good!" said the gendarme, placing his knee on his

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chest; "believe soft-spoken gentlemen again! Harkye, my friend, I have disobeyed my first order, but I will not disobey the second, and if you move I lodge a bullet in your brain."

And he levelled his carbine at Dantes, who felt the muzzle touch his head.

For a moment the idea of struggling crossed his mind, and so end the unexpected evil that had overtaken him. But he bethought him of M. de Villefort's promise; and, besides, death in a boat from the hand of a gendarme seemed too terrible. He remained motionless, but gnashing his teeth with fury.

At this moment a violent shock made the bark tremble. One of the sailors leaped on shore, a cord creaked as it ran through a pulley, and Dantes guessed they were at the end of the voyage.

His guardians, taking hold of his arms, forced him to rise, and dragged him towards the steps that led to the gate of the fortress, whilst the exempt followed, armed with a carbine and a bayonet.

Dantes made no resistance; he was like a man in a dream; he saw soldiers who stationed themselves on the sides; he felt himself forced up fresh stairs; he perceived he passed through a door, and the door closed behind him; but all this as mechanically as through a mist, nothing distinctly.

They halted for a minute, during which he strove to collect his thoughts; he looked around; he was in a court, surrounded by high walls; he heard the measured tread of sentinels, and as they passed before the light, he saw the barrels of their muskets shine.

They waited upwards of ten minutes. Certain Dantes could not escape, the gendarmes released him; they seemed awaiting orders. The orders arrived.

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"Where is the prisoner?" said a voice.

"Here," replied the gendarmes.

"Let him follow me; I am going to conduct him to his room."

"Go!" said the gendarmes, pushing Dantes.

The prisoner followed his conductor, who led him into a room almost under ground, whose bare and reeking walls seemed as though impregnated with tears: a lamp placed on a stool illuminated the apartment faintly, and showed Dantes the features of his conductor, an under-jailer, ill-clothed, and of sullen appearance.

"Here is your chamber for to-night," said he. "It is late, and Monsieur le Gouverneur is asleep; to-morrow, perhaps, he may change you. In the mean time, there is bread, water, and fresh straw, and that is all a prisoner can wish for. Good-night."

And before Dantes could open his mouth—before he had noticed where the jailer had placed his bread or the water—before he had glanced towards the corner where the straw was, the jailer disappeared, taking with him the lamp.

Dantes was alone in darkness and in silence: cold as the shadows that he felt breathe on his burning forehead.

With the first dawn of day the jailer returned, with orders to leave Dantes where he was. He found the prisoner in the same position, as if fixed there—his eyes swollen with weeping.

He had passed the night standing and without sleep.

The jailer advanced: Dantes appeared not to perceive him.

He touched him on the shoulder; Edmond started.

"Have you not slept?" said the jailer.

"I do not know," replied Dantes.

The jailer stared.

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"Are you hungry?" continued he.

"I do not know."

"Do you wish for anything?"

"I wish to see the governor."

The jailer shrugged his shoulders, and left the chamber.

Dantes followed him with his eyes, and stretched forth his hands towards the open door, but the door closed.

All his emotion then burst forth; he cast himself on the ground, weeping bitterly, and asking himself what crime he had committed that he was thus punished.

The day passed on thus; he scarcely tasted food, but walked round and round the cell, like a wild beast in its cage.

One thought in particular tormented him, namely that during his journey hither he had sat so still, whereas he might, a dozen times, have plunged into the sea, and, thanks to his powers of swimming, for which he was famous, have gained the shore, concealing himself until the arrival of a Genoese or Spanish vessel; escaped to Spain or Italy, where Mercedes and his father could have joined him. He had no fears as to how he should live; good seamen are welcome everywhere; he spoke Italian like a Tuscan, and Spanish like a Castilian; he would have then been happy, whereas he was now confined in the Chateau d'If, ignorant of the future destiny of his father and Mercedes; and all this because he had trusted to Villefort's promise. The thought was maddening, and Dantes threw himself furiously down on his straw.

The next morning the jailer made his appearance.

"Well," said the jailer, "are you more reasonable to-day?"

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Dantes made no reply.

"Come, take courage; do you want anything in my power to do for you?"

"I wish to see the governor."

"I have told you it was impossible."

"Why so?"

"Because it is not allowed by the rules."

"What is allowed, then?"

"Better fare, if you pay for it, books, and leave to walk about."

"I do not want books, I am satisfied with my food, and I do not care to walk about; but I wish to see the governor."

"If you worry me by repeating the same thing, I will not bring you any more to eat."

"Well, then," said Edmond, "if you do not, I shall die of famine, that is all."

The jailer saw by his tone he would be happy to die; and as every prisoner is worth sixpence a day to his jailer, he replied in a more subdued tone:

"What you ask is impossible: but if you are well-behaved, you will be allowed to walk about, and some day you will meet the governor, and if he chooses to reply, that is his affair."

"But," asked Dantes, "how long shall I have to wait?"

"Ah! a month—six months—a year."

"It is too long a time. I wish to see him at once."

"Ah!" said the jailer, "do not always brood over what is impossible, or you will be mad in a fortnight."

"You think so?"

"Yes, we have an instance here; it was by always offering a million of francs to the governor for his lib-

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erty, that an abbe became mad, who was in this chamber before you."

"How long has he left it?"

"Two years."

"Was he liberated, then?"

"No; he was put in a dungeon."

"Listen!" said Dantes; "I am not an abbe, I am not mad; perhaps I shall be; but at present, unfortunately, I am not. I will make you another offer."

"What is that?"

"I do not offer you a million, because I have it not; but I will give you a hundred crowns, if the first time you go to Marseilles you will seek out a young girl, named Mercedes, at the Catalans, and give her two lines from me."

"If I took them, and were detected, I should lose my place, which is worth two thousand francs a year; so that I should be a great fool to run such a risk for three hundred."

"Well," said Dantes, "mark this, if you refuse, at least, to tell Mercedes I am here, I will some day hide myself behind the door, and when you enter I will dash out your brains with this stool."

"Threats!" cried the jailer, retreating, and putting himself on the defensive, "you are certainly going mad. The abbe began like you; and in three days you will want a strait-waistcoat; but, fortunately, there are dungeons here."

Dantes whirled the stool round his head.

"Oh!" said the jailer, "you shall see the governor at once."

"That is right!" returned Dantes, dropping the stool, and sitting on it as if he were in reality mad.

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The jailer went out, and returned in an instant with a corporal and four soldiers.

"By the governor's orders," said he, "conduct the prisoner to the story beneath."

"To the dungeon, then," said the corporal.

"Yes, we must put the madmen with the madmen."

The soldiers seized Dantes, who followed passively.

He descended fifteen steps, and the door of a dungeon was opened, and he was thrust in.

The door closed, and Dantes advanced with outstretched hands until he touched the wall; he then sat down in the corner until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. The jailer was right; Dantes wanted but little of being utterly mad.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE EVENING OF THE BETROTHAL.

VILLEFORT had, as we have said, hastened back to the Place du Grand Cours, and on entering the house found all the guests in the salon at coffee. Renee was, with all the rest of the company, anxiously awaiting him, and his entrance was followed by a general exclamation.

"Well, Decapitator—Guardian of the State—Brutus, what is the matter?" said one.

"Are we threatened with a fresh Reign of Terror?" asked another.

"Has the Corsican ogre broken loose?" cried a third.

"Madame la Marquise," said Villefort, approaching his future mother-in-law, "I request your pardon for thus leaving you. M. le Marquis, honor me by a few moments' private conversation!"

"Ah! this affair is really serious, then?" asked the marquis, remarking the cloud on Villefort's brow.

"So serious that I must take leave of you for a few days; so," added he, turning to Renee, "judge for yourself if it be not important."

"You are going to leave us?" cried Renee, unable to hide her emotion.

"Alas!" returned Villefort, "I must!"

"Where, then, are you going?" asked the marquise.

"That, madame, is the secret of justice; but if you

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have any commissions for Paris, a friend of mine is going there to-night."

The guests looked at each other.

"You wish to speak to me alone?" said the marquis.

"Yes, let us go into your cabinet."

The marquis took his arm, and left the salon.

"Well!" asked he, as soon as they were in his closet, "tell me, what is it?"

"An affair of the greatest importance, that demands my immediate presence in Paris. Now excuse the indiscretion, marquis, but have you any funded property?"

"All my fortune is in the funds; seven or eight hundred thousand francs."

"Then sell out—sell out, marquis, as soon as you can."

"Eh?—how can I sell out here?"

"You have a broker; have you not?"

"Yes."

"Then give me a letter to him, and tell him to sell out without an instant's delay; perhaps even now I shall arrive too late."

"What say you?" said the marquis; "let us lose no time, then!"

And sitting down, he wrote a letter to his broker, ordering him to sell out at any loss.

"Now, then," said Villefort, placing the letter in his pocket-book, "write another!"

"To whom?"

"To the king."

"I dare not write to his majesty."

"I do not ask you to write to his majesty, but ask M. de Salvieux to do so. I want a letter that will enable me to reach the king's presence without all the formalities of demanding an audience, that would occasion a loss of time."

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"But address yourself to the keeper of the seals; he has the right of entry, and can procure you audience."

"Doubtless, but there is no occasion to divide the merit of my discovery with him. The keeper would leave me in the background, and take all the honor to himself. I tell you, marquis, my fortune is made if I only reach the Tuileries the first, for the king will not forget the service I do him."

"In that case make your preparations and I will write the letter."

"Be as quick as possible, I must be *en route* in a quarter of an hour."

"Make your carriage stop at the door."

"You will present my excuses to the marquise and Mademoiselle Renee, whom I leave on such a day with great regret."

"They are both in my room; you can say all this for yourself."

"A thousand thanks; busy yourself with the letter."

The marquis rang; a servant entered.

"Inform the Count de Salvieux I am waiting for him."

"Now, then, go!" said the marquis.

"I only go for a few moments."

Villefort hastily quitted the apartment, but reflecting that the sight of the deputy-procureur running through the streets would be enough to throw the whole city into confusion, he resumed his ordinary pace. At his door he perceived a figure in the shadow that seemed to wait for him. It was Mercedes, who, hearing no news of her lover, had come herself to inquire after him.

As Villefort drew near, she advanced and stood before him. Dantes had spoken of his bride, and Villefort instantly recognized her. Her beauty and high bearing surprised him, and when she inquired what had become

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of her lover, it seemed to him that she was the judge and he the accused.

"The young man you speak of," said Villefort, abruptly, "is a great criminal, and I can do nothing for him, mademoiselle."

Mercedes burst into tears, and, as Villefort strove to pass her, again addressed him.

"But, at least, tell me where he is, that I may learn if he is alive or dead," said she.

"I do not know; he is no longer in my hands," replied Villefort.

And desirous of putting an end to the interview, he pushed by her, and closed the door, as if to exclude the pain he felt. But remorse is not thus banished; like the wounded hero of Virgil, the arrow remained in the wound, and, arrived at the salon, Villefort, in his turn, burst into tears and sank into a chair.

The man he sacrificed to his ambition, that innocent victim he made pay the penalty of his father's faults, appeared to him pale and threatening, leading his affianced bride by the hand, and bringing with him remorse, not such as the ancients figured, furious and terrible, but that slow and consuming agony, whose pangs cease only with life. Then he had a moment's hesitation. He had frequently called for capital punishment on criminals, and owing to his irresistible eloquence they had been condemned, and yet the slightest shadow of remorse had never clouded Villefort's brow, because they were guilty; at least, he believed so; but here was an innocent man whose happiness he had destroyed: in this case he was not the judge, but the executioner.

As he thus reflected, he felt the sensation we have described, and which had hitherto been unknown to him, arise in his bosom, and fill him with vague apprehen-

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sions. It is thus that a wounded man trembles instinctively at the approach of the finger to his wound until it be healed, but Villefort's was one of those that never close, or if they do only close to reopen more agonizing than ever. If, at this moment, the sweet voice of Renee had sounded in his ears pleading for mercy, or the fair Mercedes had entered, and said, "In the name of God, I conjure you to restore me my affianced husband," his cold and trembling hands would have signed his release; but no voice broke the stillness of the chamber, and the door was opened only by Villefort's valet, who came to tell him the travelling carriage was in readiness.

Villefort rose, or rather sprang, from his chair, hastily opened one of the drawers of his *secretaire*, emptied all the gold it contained into his pocket, stood motionless an instant, his hand pressed to his head, muttered a few inarticulate sounds, and then perceiving his servant had placed his cloak on his shoulders, he sprang into the carriage, ordering the postillions to go to Rue de Grand Cours, to the house of M. de Saint-Meran.

As the marquis had promised, Villefort found the letter. He started when he saw Renee, for he fancied that she was again about to plead for Dantes. Alas! she was thinking only of Villefort's departure.

She loved Villefort, and he left her at the moment he was about to become her husband. Villefort knew not when he should return, and Renee, far from pleading for Dantes, hated the man whose crime separated her from her lover. What had Mercedes to say?

Mercedes had met Fernand at the corner of the Rue de la Loge; she had returned to the Catalans, and had despairingly cast herself on her couch. Fernand, kneeling by her side, took her hand and covered it with kisses that Mercedes did not even feel.

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She passed the night thus, and the day returned without her noticing it. Grief had made her blind to all but one object—that was Edmond.

"Ah! you are there," said she, at length.

"I have not quitted you since yesterday," returned Fernand, sorrowfully.

M. Morrel had learned that Dantes had been conducted to prison, and he had gone to all his friends, and the influential persons of the city, but the report was already in circulation that Dantes was arrested as a Bonapartist agent; and as the most sanguine looked upon any attempt of Napoleon to remount the throne as impossible, he met with nothing but refusal, and had returned home in despair.

Caderousse was equally restless and uneasy, but instead of seeking to aid Dantes he had shut himself up with two bottles of wine, in the hope of drowning reflection. But he did not succeed, and became too intoxicated to fetch any more wine, and yet not so intoxicated as to forget what had happened.

Danglars alone was content and joyous; he had got rid of an enemy, and preserved his situation on board the "Pharaoh." Danglars was one of those men born with a pen behind the ear, and an inkstand in place of a heart. Everything with him was multiplication or subtraction, and he estimated the life of a man as less precious than a figure when that figure could increase and that life would diminish the total of the amount.

Villefort, after having received M. de Salvieux's letter, embraced Renee, kissed the marquise's hand, and shaking hands with the marquis, started for Paris.

Old Dantes was dying with anxiety to know what had become of Edmond.

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CHAPTER X.

THE SMALL CABINET OF THE TUILERIES.

We will leave Villefort on the road to Paris, travelling with all speed, and penetrating the two or three apartments which precede it, enter the small cabinet of the Tuileries with the arched window, so well known as having been the favorite cabinet of Napoleon and Louis XVIII., as now that of Louis Philippe.

There in this closet, seated before a walnut-tree table he had brought with him from Hartwell, and to which, from one of those fancies not uncommon to great people, he was particularly attached, the King Louis XVIII. was carelessly listening to a man of fifty or fifty-two years of age, with gray hairs, aristocratic bearing, and exceedingly gentlemanly attire, whilst he was making a note in a volume of Horace, Gryphius' edition, which was much indebted to the sagacious observations of the philosophical monarch.

"You say, sir—" said the king.

"That I am exceedingly disquieted, sire."

"Really, have you had a visit of the seven fat kine and seven lean kine?"

"No, sire; for that would only betoken for us seven years of plenty and seven years of scarcity; and with a king as full of foresight as your majesty, scarcity is not a thing to be feared."

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"Then of what other scourge are you afraid, my dear Blacas?"

"Sire, I have every reason to believe that a storm is brewing in the south."

"Well, my dear duke," replied Louis XVIII., "I think you are wrongly informed, and know positively that, on the contrary, it is very fine weather in that direction."

Man of ability as he was, Louis XVIII. liked a pleasant jest.

"Sire," continued M. de Blacas, "if it only be to reassure a faithful servant, will your majesty send into Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphine, trusty men who will bring back a faithful report as to the feeling in these three provinces?"

"*Canimus surdis!*" replied the king, continuing the annotations in his Horace.

"Sire," replied the courtier, laughing, in order that he might seem to comprehend the quotation, "your majesty may be perfectly right in relying on the good feeling of France, but I fear I am not altogether wrong in dreading some desperate attempt."

"By whom?"

"By Bonaparte, or, at least, his party."

"My dear Blacas," said the king, "you with your alarms prevent me from working."

"And you, sire, prevent me from sleeping with your security."

"Wait, my dear sir, wait a moment, for I have such a delightful note on the *Pastor quum traheret*—wait, and I will listen to you afterwards."

There was a brief pause, during which Louis XVIII. wrote, in a hand as small as possible, another note on the margin of his "Horace," and then, looking at the

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duke with the air of a man who thinks he has an idea of his own, whilst he is but commenting upon the idea of another, he said:

"Go on, my dear duke, go on—I listen."

"Sire," said Blacas, who had for a moment the hope of sacrificing Villefort to his own profit, "I am compelled to tell you that these are not mere rumors destitute of foundation which thus disquiet me; but a reflective man, deserving all my confidence, and charged by me to watch over the south" (the duke hesitated as he pronounced these words), "has arrived post to tell me a great peril threatens the king, and then I hastened to you, sire."

"*Mala ducis avi domum*," continued Louis XVIII., still annotating.

"Does your majesty wish me to cease as to this subject?"

"By no means, dear duke; but just stretch out your hand."

"Which?"

"Whichever you please—there to the left."

"Here, sire."

"I tell you to the left, and you seek the right—I mean on my right! yes, there! You will find the report of the minister of police of yesterday. But here is M. Dandre himself;" and M. Dandre, announced by the chamberlain in waiting, entered.

"Come in," said Louis XVIII., with an imperceptible smile, "come in, baron, and tell the duke all you know—the latest news of M. de Bonaparte; do not conceal anything, however serious—let us see, the island of Elba is a volcano, and we may expect to have issuing thence flaming and bristling war—*bella, horrida bella!*"

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M. Dandre leaned very respectfully on the back of a chair with his two hands, and said:

"Has your majesty perused yesterday's report?"

"Yes, yes! but tell the count himself, who cannot find anything, what the report contains; give him the particulars of what the usurper is doing in his islet."

"Monsieur," said the baron to the count, "all the servants of his majesty must approve of the latest intelligence which we have from the isle of Elba. Bonaparte—" M. Dandre looked at Louis XVIII., who, employed in writing a note, did not even raise his head—"Bonaparte," continued the baron, "is mortally wearied, and passes whole days in watching his miners at work at Porto-Longone."

"And scratches himself for amusement," added the king.

"Scratches himself?" inquired the count, "what does your majesty mean?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear count; did you forget that this great man, this hero, this demigod, is attacked with a malady of the skin which worries him to death, *prurigo?*"

"And, moreover, M. le Comte," continued the minister of police, "we are almost assured that, in a very short time, the usurper will be insane."

"Insane?"

"Insane to a degree; his head becomes weaker. Sometimes he weeps bitterly, sometimes laughs boisterously: at other times he passes hours on the seashore, flinging stones in the water, and when the flint makes 'duck-and-drake' five or six times, he appears as delighted as if he had gained another Marengo or Austerlitz. Now you must agree these are indubitable symptoms of weakness."

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"Or of wisdom, M. le Baron—or of wisdom," said Louis XVIII., laughing; "the greatest captains of antiquity recreated themselves with casting pebbles into the ocean: see Plutarch's Life of Scipio Africanus."

M. de Blacas pondered deeply on this blind repose of monarch and minister. Villefort, who, did not choose to reveal the whole secret, lest another should reap all the benefit of the disclosure, had yet communicated enough to cause him the greatest uneasiness.

"Well, well, Dandre," said Louis XVIII., "Blacas is not yet convinced; let us proceed therefore to the usurper's conversion."

The minister of police bowed.

"The usurper's conversion!" murmured the count, looking at the king and Dandre, who spoke alternately, like Virgil's shepherds,—"the usurper converted!"

"Decidedly, my dear count."

"In what way converted?"

"To good principles; explain all about it, baron."

"Why this it is, M. le Comte," said the minister, with the gravest air in the world; "Napoleon lately had a review, and as two or three of his old veterans testified a desire to return to France, he gave them their dismissal, and exhorted them to 'serve the good king;' these were his own words, M. le Comte, I am certain of that."

"Well, Blacas, what think you of this?" inquired the king triumphantly, and pausing for a moment from the voluminous scholiast before him.

"I say, sire, that M. the minister of police, or I am greatly deceived, and as it is impossible it can be the minister of police, as he has the guardianship of the safety and honor of your majesty, it is probable I am in error. However, sire, if I might advise, your

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majesty will interrogate the person of whom I spoke to you, and I will urge your majesty to do him this honor."

"Most willingly, count; under your auspices I will receive any person you please, but with arms in hand. M. le Ministre, have you any report more recent than this, dated the 20th February, and this is the 4th of March?"

"No, sire, but I am hourly expecting one; it may have arrived since I left my office."

"Go thither, and if there be none—well, well," continued Louis XVIII., "make one; that is the usual way, is it not?" and the king laughed facetiously.

"Oh, sire," replied the minister, "we have no occasion to invent any; every day our desks are loaded with most circumstantial denunciations, coming from crowds of individuals who hope for some return for services which they seek to render, but cannot; they trust to fortune, and rely that some unexpected event will give a kind of reality to their predictions."

"Well, sir, go," said Louis XVIII., "and remember I am waiting for you."

"I will but go and return, sire; I shall be back in ten minutes."

"And I, sire," said M. de Blacas, "will go and find my messenger."

"Wait, sir, wait," said Louis XVIII.; "really, M de Blacas, I must change your armorial bearings; I will give you an eagle with outstretched wings, holding in its claws a prey which tries in vain to escape, and bearing this device, *Tenax.*"

"Sire, I listen," said De Blacas, biting his nails with impatience.

"I wish to consult you on this passage, '*Molli fugies anhelitu;*' you know how it refers to a stag flying from a

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wolf. Are you not a sportsman and a great wolf-hunter? Well, then, what do you think of the *molli anhelitu?*"

"Admirable, sire; but my messenger is like the stag you refer to, for he has posted two hundred and twenty leagues in little more than three days."

"Which is undergoing great fatigue and anxiety, my dear count, when we have a telegraph which corresponds in three or four hours, and that without putting it the least in the world out of breath."

"Ah, sire, you recompense but badly this poor young man, who has come so far and with so much ardor to give your majesty useful information. If only for the sake of M. de Salvieux, who recommends him to me, I entreat your majesty to receive him graciously.

"M. de Salvieux, my brother's chamberlain?"

"Yes, sire."

"He is at Marseilles."

"And he writes me thence."

"Does he speak to you of this conspiracy?"

"No, but strongly recommends M. de Villefort, and begs me to present him to your majesty."

"M. de Villefort!" cried the king, "is the messenger's name M. de Villefort?"

"Yes, sire."

"And he comes from Marseilles?"

"In person."

"Why did you not mention his name at once?" replied the king, betraying some uneasiness.

"Sire, I thought his name was unknown to your majesty."

"No, no, Blacas; he is a man of strong and elevated understanding, ambitious too, and, *pardieu!* you know his father's name?"

"His father?"

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"Yes, Noirtier."

"Noirtier the Girondin?—Noirtier the senator?"

"He himself."

"And your majesty has employed the son of such a man?"

"Blacas, my friend, you have but limited comprehension. I told you Villefort was ambitious, and to attain his ambition Villefort would sacrifice everything, even his father."

"Then, sire, may I present him?"

"This instant, count! Where is he?"

"Waiting below in my carriage."

"Seek him at once."

"I hasten to do so."

The count left the royal presence with the speed of a young man; his really sincere royalism made him youthful again. Louis XVIII. remained alone, and turning his eyes on his half-opened Horace, muttered, "*Justum et tenacem propositi virum.*"

M. de Blacas returned with the same rapidity he had descended, but in the ante-chamber he was forced to appeal to the king's authority. Villefort's dusty garb, his costume, which was not of our courtly cut, excited the susceptibility of M. de Breze, who was all astonishment at finding that this young man had the pretension to enter before the king in such attire. The count, however, superseded all difficulties with a word—his majesty's order, and, in spite of the observations which the master of the ceremonies made for the honor of his office and principles, Villefort was introduced.

The king was seated in the same place where the count had left him. On opening the door, Villefort found himself facing him, and the young magistrate's first impulse was to pause.

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"Come in, M. de Villefort," said the king, "come in."

Villefort bowed, and advancing a few steps, waited until the king should interrogate him.

"M. de Villefort," said Louis XVIII., "the Count de Blacas assures me you have some interesting information to communicate."

"Sire, the count is right, and I believe your majesty will think it important."

"In the first place, and before everything else, sir, is the bad news as great in your opinion as it is wished to make me believe?"

"Sire, I believe it to be more urgent, but I hope, by the speed I have used, that it is not irreparable."

"Speak as fully as you please, sir," said the king, who began to give way to the emotion which had showed itself in Blacas' face and affected Villefort's voice—"speak, sir, and pray begin at the beginning; I like order in everything."

"Sire," said Villefort, "I will render a faithful report to your majesty, but I must entreat your forgiveness if my anxiety creates some obscurity in my language."

A glance at the king after this discreet and subtle exordium assured Villefort of the benignity of his august auditor, and he continued:

"Sire, I have come as rapidly to Paris as possible, to inform your majesty that I have discovered, in the exercise of my duties, not a commonplace and insignificant plot, such as is every day got up in the lower ranks of the people and in the army, but an actual conspiracy, a storm which menaces no less than the throne of your majesty. Sire, the usurper is arming three ships; he meditates some project, which, however mad, is yet, perhaps, terrible. At this moment he will have

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left Elba, to go whither I know not, but assuredly to attempt a landing either at Naples, or on the coast of Tuscany, or perhaps on the shore of France. Your majesty is well aware that the sovereign of the Isle of Elba has maintained his relations with Italy and France?"

"I am, sir," said the king, much agitated; "and recently we have had information that the Bonapartist clubs have had meetings in the Rue Saint-Jacques. But proceed, I beg of you; how did you obtain these details?"

"Sire, they are the results of an examination which I have made of a man of Marseilles, whom I have watched for some time, and arrested on the day of my departure. This person, a sailor, of turbulent character, and whom I suspected of Bonapartism, has been secretly to the Isle of Elba. There he saw the grand marshal, who charged him with a verbal mission to a Bonapartist in Paris, whose name I could not extract from him; but this mission was to prepare men's minds for a return (it is the man who says this, sire), a return which will soon occur."

"And where is this man?"

"In prison, sire!"

"And the matter seems serious to you?"

"So serious, sire, that when the circumstance surprised me in the midst of a family festival, on the very day of my betrothal, I left my bride and friends, postponing everything, that I might hasten to lay at your majesty's feet the fears which impressed me, and the assurance of my devotion."

"True," said Louis XVIII., "was there not a marriage engagement between you and Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran?"

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"Daughter of one of your majesty's most faithful servants."

"Yes, yes; but let us talk of this plot, M. de Villefort."

"Sire, I fear it is more than a plot; I fear it is a conspiracy."

"A conspiracy in these times," said Louis XVIII., smiling, "is a thing very easy to meditate, but more difficult to conduct to an end; inasmuch as, re-established so recently on the throne of our ancestors, we have our eyes open at once upon the past, the present, and the future. For the last ten months my ministers have redoubled their vigilance, in order to watch the shore of the Mediterranean. If Bonaparte landed at Naples, the whole coalition would be on foot before he could even reach Piombino; if he land in Tuscany, he will be in an unfriendly territory; if he land in France, it must be with a handful of men, and the result of that is easily foretold, execrated as he is by the population. Take courage, sir; but at the same time rely on our royal gratitude."

"Ah! here is M. Dandre!" cried De Blacas.

At this instant the minister of police appeared at the door, pale, trembling, and as if ready to faint.

Villefort was about to retire, but M. de Blacas, taking his hand, restrained him.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE OGRE OF CORSICA.

At the sight of this agitation Louis XVIII. pushed from him violently the table at which he was writing.

"What ails you, M. le Baron?" he exclaimed. "You appear quite aghast. This trouble—this hesitation—have they anything to do with what M. de Blacas has told me, and M. de Villefort has just confirmed?"

M. de Blacas moved suddenly towards the baron, but the fright of the courtier precluded the triumph of the statesman; and besides, as matters were, it was much more to his advantage that the prefect of police should triumph over him, than that he should humiliate the prefect.

"Sire—" stammered the baron.

"Well, what is it?" asked Louis XVIII.

The minister of police, giving way to an impulse of despair, was about to throw himself at the feet of Louis XVIII., who retreated a step and frowned.

"Will you speak?" he said.

"Oh! sire, what a dreadful misfortune! I am indeed to be pitied. I can never forgive myself!"

"Monsieur," said Louis XVIII., "I command you to speak."

"Well, sire, the usurper left Elba on the 26th February, and landed on the 1st of March."

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"And where? In Italy?" asked the king eagerly.

"In France, sire, at a small port near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan."

"The usurper landed in France, near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan, 150 leagues from Paris, on the 1st of March, and you only acquired this information to-day, the 4th of March! Well, sir, what you tell me is impossible. You must have received a false report, or you have gone mad."

"Alas! sire, it is but too true!"

Louis made a gesture of indescribable anger and alarm, and then drew himself up as if this sudden blow had struck him at the same moment in heart and countenance.

"In France!" he cried, "the usurper in France! Then they did not watch over this man. Who knows? they were, perhaps, in league with him."

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed the Comte de Blacas, "M. Dandre is not a man to be accused of treason! Sire, we have all been blind, and the minister of police has shared the general blindness, that is all."

"But—" said Villefort, and then suddenly checking himself, he was silent; then he continued, "Your pardon, sire," he said, bowing, "my zeal carried me away. Will your majesty deign to excuse me?"

"Speak, sir, speak boldly," replied Louis. "You alone forewarned us of the evil; now try and aid us with the remedy!"

"Sire," said Villefort, "the usurper is detested in the south; and it seems to me that if he ventured into the south, it would be easy to raise Languedoc and Provence against him."

"Yes, assuredly," replied the minister, "but he is advancing by Gap and Sisteron."

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"Advancing! he is advancing!" said Louis XVIII. "Is he then advancing on Paris?"

The minister of police kept a silence which was equivalent to a complete avowal.

"And Dauphine, sir?" inquired the king of Villefort, "Do you think it possible to rouse that as well as Provence?"

"Sire, I am sorry to tell your majesty a cruel fact; but the feeling in Dauphine is far from resembling that of Provence or Languedoc. The mountaineers are Bonapartists, sire."

"Then," murmured Louis, "he was well informed. And how many men had he with him?"

"I do not know, sire," answered the minister of police.

"What! you do not know? Have you neglected to obtain information of this circumstance? It is true this is of small importance," he added, with a withering smile.

"Sire, it was impossible to learn; the despatch simply stated the fact of the landing and the route taken by the usurper."

"And how did this despatch reach you?" inquired the king.

The minister bowed his head, and whilst a deep color overspread his cheeks, he stammered out:

"By the telegraph, sire."

Louis XVIII. advanced a step, and folded his arms over his chest as Napoleon would have done.

"So, then!" he exclaimed, turning pale with anger, "seven conjoined and allied armies overthrew that man. A miracle of Heaven replaced me on the throne of my fathers after five-and-twenty years of exile. I have, during those five-and-twenty years, studied, sounded, analyzed the men and things of that France which was promised to me; and when I have attained the end of

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all my wishes, the power I hold in my hands bursts and shatters me to atoms!"

"Sire, it is fatality!" muttered the minister, feeling that such a pressure, however light for destiny, was sufficient to overwhelm a man.

"What our enemies say of us is, then, true. We have learnt nothing, forgotten nothing! If I were betrayed, as he was, I would console myself; but to be in the midst of persons elevated by myself to dignities, who ought to watch over me more preciously than over themselves; for my fortune is theirs!—before me they were nothing—after me they will be nothing, and perish miserably from incapacity—inaptitude! Oh, yes, sir, you are right—it is fatality!"

The minister was bowed beneath this crushing sarcasm. M. de Blacas wiped the moisture from his brow. Villefort smiled within himself, for he felt his increased importance

"To fall!" continued King Louis, who at the first glance had sounded the abyss on which the monarchy hung suspended—"to fall, and learn that fall by telegraph! Oh! I would rather mount the scaffold of my brother, Louis XVI., than thus descend the staircase of the Tuileries, driven away by ridicule. Ridicule, sir—why, you know not its power in France, and yet you ought to know it!"

"Sire, sire," murmured the minister, "for pity's sake—"

"Approach, M. de Villefort," resumed the king, addressing the young man, who, motionless and breathless, was listening to a conversation on which depended the destiny of a kingdom. "Approach and tell monsieur that it is possible to know beforehand all that he has not known."

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"Sire, it was really impossible to learn secrets which that man concealed from all the world."

"Really impossible! Yes—that is a great word, sir. Unfortunately, there are great words as there are great men; I have measured them. Really impossible for a minister who has an office, agents, spies, and fifteen hundred thousand francs for secret service money, to know what is going on at sixty leagues from the coast of France! Well, then, see, here is a gentleman who had none of these resources at his disposal—a gentleman, only a simple magistrate, who learned more than you with all your police, and who would have saved my crown, if, like you, he had the power of directing a telegraph."

The look of the minister of police was turned with concentrated spite on Villefort, who bent his head with the modesty of triumph.

"I do not mean that for you, Blacas," continued Louis XVIII., "for if you have discovered nothing, at least you have had the good sense to persevere in your suspicions. Any other than yourself would have considered the disclosure of M. de Villefort as insignificant, or else dictated by a venal ambition."

These words were meant to allude to those which the minister of police had uttered with so much confidence an hour before.

Villefort understood the drift of the king. Any other person would, perhaps, have been too much overcome by the intoxication of praise; but he feared to make for himself a mortal enemy of the police minister, although he perceived Dandre was irrevocably lost. In fact, the minister who, in the plenitude of his power, had been unable to penetrate Napoleon's secret, might in the convulsions of his dying throes penetrate his (Villefort's)

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secret, for which end he had but to interrogate Dantes. He, therefore, came to the rescue of the crestfallen minister, instead of aiding to crush him.

"Sire," said Villefort, "the rapidity of the event must prove to your majesty that God alone can prevent it by raising a tempest; what your majesty is pleased to attribute to me as profound perspicacity is simply owing to chance; and I have profited by that chance, like a good and devoted servant, that's all. Do not attribute to me more than I deserve, sire, that your majesty may never have occasion to recall the first opinion you have been pleased to form of me."

The minister of police thanked the young man by an eloquent look, and Villefort understood that he had succeeded in his design; that is to say, that without forfeiting the gratitude of the king he had made a friend of one on whom, in case of necessity, he might rely.

"'Tis well!" resumed the king. "And now, gentlemen," he continued, turning towards M. de Blacas and the minister of police, "I have no further occasion for you, and you may retire; what now remains to do is in the department of the minister of war."

"Fortunately, sire," said M. de Blacas, "we can rely on the army; your majesty knows how every report confirms their loyalty and attachment!"

"Do not mention reports, sir, to me! for I know now what confidence to place in them. Yet, *apropos* of reports, M. le Baron, what intelligence have you as to our affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques?"

"The affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques!" exclaimed Villefort, unable to repress an exclamation. Then suddenly pausing, he added, "Your pardon, sire, but my devotion to your majesty has made me forget, not the

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respect I have, for that is too deeply engraven in my heart, but the rules of etiquette."

"Say and act, sir," replied the king; "you have acquired the right to inquire."

"Sire," replied the minister of police, "I came this moment to give your majesty fresh information which I had obtained on this head, when your majesty's attention was attracted by this terrible affair of the gulf, and now these facts will cease to interest your majesty."

"On the contrary, sir—on the contrary," said Louis XVIII., "this affair seems to me to have a decided connection with that which occupies our attention; and the death of General Quesnel will, perhaps, put us on the direct track of a great internal conspiracy."

At the name of General Quesnel, Villefort trembled.

"All combines, sir," said the minister of police, "to insure the probability that his death is not the result of suicide, as we at first believed, but of an assassination. General Quesnel had quitted, as it appears, a Bonapartist club when he disappeared. An unknown person had been with him that morning, and made an appointment with him in the Rue Saint-Jacques; unfortunately, the general's valet-de-chambre, who was dressing his hair at the moment when the stranger entered, heard the street mentioned, but did not catch the number."

As the police minister related this to the king, Villefort, who seemed as if his very existence hung on his lips, turned alternately red and pale. The king looked towards him.

"Do you not think with me, M. de Villefort, that General Quesnel, whom they believed attached to the usurper, but who was really entirely devoted to me, has perished the victim of a Bonapartist ambush?"

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"It is probable, sire," repeated Villefort. "But is this all that is known?"

"They are on the traces of the man who appointed the meeting with him."

"On his traces?" said Villefort.

"Yes, the servant has given his description. He is a man of from fifty to fifty-two years of age, brown, with black eyes covered with shaggy eyebrows, and a thick moustache. He was dressed in a blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, and wore at his button-hole the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor. Yesterday an individual was followed exactly corresponding with this description, but he was lost sight of at the corner of the Rue de la Jussienne and the Rue Coq-Heron."

Villefort leaned on the back of an arm-chair, for in proportion as the minister of police spoke, he felt his legs bend under him; but when he learnt that the unknown had escaped the vigilance of the agent who followed him, he breathed again.

"Continue to seek for this man, sir," said the king to the minister of police, "for if, as all conspires to convince me, General Quesnel, who would have been so useful to us at this moment, has been murdered, his assassins, Bonapartists or not, shall be cruelly punished."

It required all Villefort's *sang-froid* not to betray the terror with which this declaration of the king inspired him.

"How strange!" continued the king, with some asperity, "the police thinks all is said when it says, 'A murder has been committed,' and particularly when it adds, 'And we are on the trace of the guilty persons.'"

"Sire, your majesty will, I trust, be amply satisfied on this point, at least."

"We shall see: I will no longer detain you, baron.

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M. de Villefort, you must be fatigued after so long a journey; go and report yourself. Of course you stop at your father's?"

A faintness came over Villefort.

"No, sire," he replied, "I alighted at the Hotel de Madrid, in the Rue de Tournon."

"But you have seen him?"

"Sire, I went straight to M. the Comte de Blacas."

"But you will see him, then?"

"I think not, sire."

"Ah, I forgot," said Louis, smiling in a manner which proved that all these questions were not made without a motive—"I forgot you and M. Noirtier are not on the best terms possible, and that this is another sacrifice made to the royal cause, and for which you should be recompensed."

"Sire, the kindness your majesty deigns to evince towards me is a recompense which so far surpasses my utmost ambition, that I have nothing more to request."

"Never mind, sir, we will not forget you; make your mind easy. In the mean while" (the king here detached the cross of the Legion of Honor he usually wore over his blue coat, near the cross of Saint Louis, above the order of Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel and Saint-Lazare, and gave it to Villefort)—"in the mean while take this cross."

"Sire, "said Villefort, "your majesty mistakes, this cross is that of an officer."

"*Ma foi !*" said Louis XVIII., "take it, such as it is, for I have not the time to procure you another. Blacas, let it be your care to see that the brevet is made out and sent to M. de Villefort."

Villefort's eyes were filled with tears of joy and pride; he took the cross and kissed it.

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"And now," he said, "may I inquire what are the orders with which your majesty deigns to honor me?"

"Take what rest you require and remember that, unable to serve me here in Paris, you may be of the greatest service to me at Marseilles."

"Sire," replied Villefort, bowing, "in an hour I shall have quitted Paris."

"Go, sir," said the king; "and should I forget you (king's memories are short), do not be afraid to bring yourself to my recollection. M. le Baron, send for the minister of war. Blacas, remain."

"Ah, sir," said the minister of police to Villefort, as they left the Tuileries, "you enter by the right door, your fortune is made."

"Will it be long first?" muttered Villefort, saluting the minister whose career was ended, and looking about him for a hackney-coach. One passed at the moment, which he hailed; he gave his address to the driver, and springing in, threw himself on the seat, and gave loose to dreams of ambition.

Ten minutes afterwards Villefort reached his hotel, ordered his horses in two hours, and desired to have his breakfast brought to him. He was about to commence his repast when the sound of the bell, rung by a free and firm hand, was heard. The valet opened the door, and Villefort heard his name pronounced.

"Who could know that I was here already?" said the young man.

The valet entered.

"Well," said Villefort, "what is it? Who rang? Who asked for me?"

"A stranger, who will not send in his name."

"A stranger who will not send in his name! What can he want with me?"

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"He wishes to speak to you."

"To me?"

"Yes."

"Did he mention my name?"

"Yes."

"What sort of a person is he?"

"Why, sir, a man of about fifty."

"Short or tall?"

"About your own height, sir."

"Dark or fair?"

"Dark—very dark; with black eyes, black hair, black eyebrows."

"And how dressed?" asked Villefort, quickly.

"In a blue frock-coat, buttoned up close, decorated with the Legion of Honor."

"It is he!" said Villefort, turning pale.

"Eh, *pardieu!*" said the individual whose description we have twice given, entering the door, "what a deal of ceremony! Is it the custom of Marseilles for sons to keep their fathers waiting in their ante-rooms?"

"Father!" cried Villefort, "then I was not deceived; I felt sure it must be you."

"Well, then, if you felt so sure," replied the newcomer, putting his cane in a corner and his hat on a chair, "allow me to say, my dear Gerard, that it was not very filial of you to keep me waiting at the door."

"Leave us, Germain," said Villefort.

The servant quitted the apartment with evident signs of astonishment.

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CHAPTER XII.

FATHER AND SON.

M. NOIRTIER—for it was indeed he who entered—followed with his eyes the servant until he had closed the door, and then, fearing, no doubt, that he might be overheard in the ante-chamber, he opened the door again; nor was the precaution useless, as appeared from the rapid retreat of Germain, who proved that he was not exempt from the sin which ruined our first parents.

M. Noirtier then took the trouble to close carefully the door of the ante-chamber, then that of the bedchamber; and then extended his hand to Villefort, who had followed all his motions with surprise which he could not conceal.

"Well, now, my dear Gerard," said he to the young man, with a very significant look, "do you know, you seem as if you were not very glad to see me?"

"My dear father," said Villefort, "I am, on the contrary delighted, but I so little expected your visit that it has somewhat overcome me."

"But, my dear fellow," replied M. Noirtier, seating himself, "I might say the same thing to you when you announce to me your wedding for the 28th of February, and on the 4th of March here you are in Paris."

"And if I have come, my dear father," said Gerard, drawing closer to M. Noirtier, "do not complain, for it is for you that I came, and my journey will save you."

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"Ah, indeed!" said M. Noirtier, stretching himself out at his ease in the chair. "Really, pray tell me all about it, M. le Magistrate, for it must be interesting."

"Father, you have heard speak of a certain club of Bonapartists held in the Rue Saint-Jacques?"

"No. 53: yes—I am vice-president."

"Father, your coolness makes me shudder."

"Why, my dear boy, when a man has been proscribed by the mountaineers, has escaped from Paris in a hay-cart, been hunted in the *landes* of Bordeaux by M. Robespierre's bloodhounds, he becomes accustomed to most things. But go on—what about the club in the Rue Saint-Jacques?"

"Why, they induced General Quesnel to go there, and General Quesnel, who quitted his own house at nine o'clock in the evening, was found the next day in the Seine."

"And who told you this fine story?"

"The king himself."

"Well, then, in return for your story," continued Noirtier, "I will tell you one."

"My dear father, I think I already know what you are about to tell me."

"Ah, you have heard of the landing of the emperor?"

"Not so loud, father, I entreat of you—for your own sake as well as mine. Yes, I heard this news, and knew it even before you could; for three days ago I posted from Marseilles to Paris with all possible speed, and half desperate because I could not send with a wish two hundred leagues ahead of me the thought which was agitating my brain."

"Three days ago? you are crazy. Why three days ago the emperor had not landed."

"No matter; I was aware of his project."

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"How did you learn it?"

"By a letter addressed to you from the Isle of Elba."

"To me?"

"To you: and which I discovered in the pocket-book of the messenger. Had that letter fallen into the hands of another, you, my dear father, would, probably, ere this, have been shot."

Villefort's father laughed.

"Come, come," said he, "it appears that the Restoration has learned from the Empire the mode of settling affairs speedily. Shot, my dear boy! you go ahead with a vengeance. Where is this letter you talk about? I know you too well to suppose you would allow such a thing to pass you."

"I burnt it, for fear that even a fragment should remain; for that letter must have effected your condemnation."

"And the destruction of your future prospects," replied Noirtier; "yes, I can easily comprehend that. But I have nothing to fear whilst I have you to protect me."

"I do better than that, sir—I save you."

"You do? why, really, the thing becomes more and more dramatic—explain yourself."

"I must refer again to the club in the Rue Saint-Jacques."

"It appears that this club is rather a bore to the police. Why didn't they search more vigilantly? they would have found—"

"They have not found, but they are on the track."

"Yes, that's the usual phrase, I know it well. When the police is at fault it declares that it is on the track, and the government patiently awaits the day when it comes to say, with a sneaking air, that the track is lost."

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"Yes; but they have found a corpse; the general has been killed, and in all countries they call that a murder."

"A murder do you call it? why there is nothing to prove that the general was murdered. People are found every day in the Seine, having thrown themselves in, or have been drowned from not knowing how to swim."

"Father, you know very well that the general was not a man to drown himself in despair, and people do not bathe in the Seine in the month of January. No, no, do not mistake, this death was a murder in every sense of the word."

"And who thus designated it?"

"The king himself."

"The king! I thought he was philosopher enough to allow that there was no murder in politics. In politics, my dear fellow, you know as well as I do, there are no men, but ideas—no feelings, but interests; in politics we do not kill a man, we only remove an obstacle, that is all. Would you like to know how matters have progressed? well, I will tell you. It was thought reliance might be placed in General Quesnel; he was recommended to us from the Isle of Elba; one of us went to him and invited him to the Rue Saint-Jacques, where he would find some friends. He came there, and the plan was unfolded to him of the leaving Elba, the projected landing, etc. When he had heard and comprehended all to the fullest extent, he replied that he was a royalist. Then all looked at each other—he was made to take an oath, and did so, but with such an ill grace, that it was really tempting Providence to swear thus, and yet, in spite of that, the general was allowed to depart free—perfectly free. Yet, he did not return home. What could that mean? why, my dear fellow, that on leaving us he lost his way, that is all. A mur-

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der! really, Villefort, you surprise me. You a deputy procureur, to found an accusation on such bad premises! Did I ever say to you, when you were fulfilling your character as a royalist, and cut off the head of one of my party, 'My son, you have committed a murder?' No, I said, 'Very well, sir, you have gained the victory, to-morrow, perchance, it will be our turn.'"

"But, father, take care when our turn comes; our revenge will be sweeping."

"I do not understand you."

"You rely on the usurper's return?"

"We do."

"You are mistaken, he will not advance two leagues into the interior of France without being followed, tracked, and caught like a wild beast."

"My dear fellow, the emperor is at this moment on the way to Grenoble, on the 10th or 12th he will be at Lyons, and on the 20th or 25th at Paris."

"The population will rise."

"Yes, to go and meet him."

"He has but a handful of men with him, and armies will be despatched against him."

"Yes, to escort him to the capital. Really, my dear Gerard, you are but a child, you think yourself well informed because a telegraph has told you three days after the landing, 'The usurper has landed at Cannes with several men.' He is pursued? But where is he? what is he doing? You do not know well, and in this way they will pursue him to Paris without drawing a trigger."

"Grenoble and Lyons are faithful cities, and will oppose to him an impassable barrier."

"Grenoble will open her gates to him with enthusiasm —all Lyons will hasten to welcome him. Believe me,

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we are as well informed as you, and our police is as good as your own. Would you like a proof of it? Well, you wished to conceal your journey from me, and yet I knew of your arrival half an hour after you had passed the barrier. You gave your direction to no one but your postilion, yet I have your address, and in proof, I am here the very instant you are going to sit at table. Ring, then, if you please, for a second knife, fork, and plate, and we will dine together."

"Indeed!" replied Villefort, looking at his father with astonishment, "you really do seem very well informed."

"Eh? the thing is simple enough. You who are in power have only the means that money produces—we who are in expectation have those which devotion prompts."

"Devotion!" said Villefort with a sneer.

"Yes, devotion, for that is, I believe, the phrase for hopeful ambition."

And Villefort's father extended his hand to the bell-rope, to summon the servant whom his son had not called. Villefort arrested his arm. "Wait, my dear father," said the young man, "one other word."

"Say it."

"However ill-conducted is the royalist police, they yet know one terrible thing."

"What is that?"

"The description of the man who, on the morning of the day when General Quesnel disappeared, presented himself at his house."

"Oh, the admirable police have found out that, have they? And what may be that description?"

"Brown complexion; hair, eyebrows, and whiskers, black; blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin; rosette

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of an officer of the Legion of Honor in his button-hole, a hat with wide brim, and a cane."

"Ah! ah! that is it, is it?" said Noirtier; "and why, then, have they not laid hands on the individual?"

"Because yesterday, or the day before, they lost sight of him at the corner of the Rue Coq-Héron."

"Didn't I say your police was good for nothing?"

"Yes, but still they may lay hands on him."

"True," said Noirtier, looking carelessly around him, "true, if this individual were not warned as he is;" and, he added with a smile, "he will consequently change looks and costume."

At these words he rose, and put off his frock-coat and cravat, went towards a table on which lay all the requisites of the toilet for his son, lathered his face, took a razor, and with a firm hand cut off the whiskers that might have compromised him and gave the police so decided a trace. Villefort watched him with alarm, not divested of admiration.

His whiskers cut off, Noirtier gave another turn to his hair, took, instead of his black cravat, a colored neckerchief, which lay at the top of an open portmanteau; put on, in lieu of his blue and high-buttoned frock-coat, a coat of Villefort's, of dark brown, and sloped away in front; tried on before the glass a narrow-brimmed hat of his son's which appeared to fit him perfectly; and leaving his cane in the corner where he had deposited it, he made to whistle in his powerful hand a small bamboo switch, which the dandy deputy used when he walked, and which aided in giving him that easy swagger, which was one of his principal characteristics.

"Well," he said, turning towards his wondering son, when this disguise was completed—"well, do you think your police will recognize me now?"

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"No, father," stammered Villefort, "at least, I hope not."

"And now, my dear boy," continued Noirtier, "I rely on your prudence to remove all the things which I leave in your care."

"Oh, rely on me," said Villefort.

"Yes, yes! and now I believe you are right, and that you have really saved my life, but be assured I will return the obligation to you hereafter."

Villefort shook his head.

"You are not convinced yet?"

"I hope, at least, that you may be mistaken."

"Shall you see the king again?"

"Perhaps."

"Would you pass in his eyes for a prophet?"

"Prophets of evil are not in favor at the court, father."

"True, but some day they do them justice; and supposing a second restoration, you would then pass for a great man."

"Well, what should I say to the king?"

"Say this to him: 'Sire, you are deceived as to the feeling in France, as to the opinions of the town, and the prejudices of the army: he whom in Paris you call the ogre of Corsica, who at Nevers is styled the usurper, is already saluted as Bonaparte at Lyons, and emperor at Grenoble. You think he is tracked, pursued, captured; he is advancing as rapidly as his own eagles. The soldiers you believe dying with hunger, worn out with fatigue, ready to desert, increase like atoms of snow about the rolling ball which hastens onward. Sire, go, leave France to its real master, to him who did not buy, but acquired it—go, sire, not that you incur any risk, for your adversary is powerful enough to show you any mercy, but because it would be humiliating for a

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grandson of Saint-Louis to owe his life to the man of Arcola, Marengo, Austerlitz.' Tell him this, Gerard, or, rather, tell him nothing. Keep your journey a secret, do not boast of what you have come to Paris to do, or have done; return with all speed, enter Marseilles at night, and your house by the back door, and there remain quiet, submissive, secret, and, above all inoffensive, for this time I swear to you we shall act like powerful men who know their enemies. Go, my son—go, my dear Gerard, and by your obedience to my paternal orders, or, if you prefer it, friendly counsels, we will keep you in your place. This will be," added Noirtier, with a smile, "one means by which you may a second time save me, if the political balance should one day place you high and me low. Adieu, my dear Gerard, and at your next journey alight at my door."

Noirtier left the room when he had finished, with the same calmness that had characterized him during the whole of this remarkable and trying conversation.

Villefort, pale and agitated, ran to the window, put aside the curtain, and saw him pass, cool and collected, by two or three ill-looking men at the corner of the street, who were there, perhaps, to arrest a man with black whiskers, and a blue frock-coat, and a hat with a broad brim.

Villefort stood watching, breathless, until his father disappeared at the Rue Bussy. Then returned to the various articles he had left behind him, put at the bottom of his portmanteau his black cravat and blue frock-coat, threw the hat into a dark closet, broke the cane into small bits, and flung it in the fire, put on his travelling cap, and calling his valet, checked with a look the thousand questions he was ready to ask, paid his bill, sprung into his carriage, which was ready, learned at

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Lyons that Bonaparte had entered Grenoble, and in the midst of the tumult which prevailed along the road, at length reached Marseilles, a prey to all the hopes and fears which enter into the heart of a man with ambition and its first successes.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS.

M. NOIRTIER was a true prophet, and things progressed rapidly as he had predicted. Every one knows the history of the famous return from Elba, a return which, without example in the past, will probably remain without imitation in the future.

Louis XVIII. made but a faint attempt to parry this unexpected blow; the monarchy he had scarcely reconstructed tottered on its precarious foundation, and it needed but a sign of the emperor to hurl to the ground all this edifice composed of ancient prejudices and new ideas. Villefort therefore gained nothing save the king's gratitude (which was rather likely to injure him at the present time) and the cross of the Legion of Honor, which he had the prudence not to wear, although M. de Blacas had duly forwarded the brevet.

Napoleon would, doubtless, have deprived Villefort of his office, had it not been for Noirtier, who was all-powerful at the court; and thus the Girondin of '93 and the Senator of 1806 protected him who so lately had been his protector.

All Villefort's influence barely enabled him to stifle the secret Dantes had so nearly divulged.

The king's procureur alone was deprived of his office, being suspected of royalism.

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However, scarcely was the imperial power established, that is scarcely had the emperor re-entered the Tuileries and issued his numerous orders from that little cabinet into which we have introduced our readers, and on the table of which he found Louis XVIII's snuff-box, half full, than Marseilles began to rekindle the flames of civil war, and it required but little to excite the populace to acts of far greater violence than the shouts and insults with which they assailed the royalists whenever they ventured abroad.

Owing to this change, the worthy shipowner became at that moment, we will not say all-powerful—because Morrel was a prudent and rather timid man, so much so, that many of the most zealous partisans of Bonaparte accused him of "*moderation*"—but sufficiently influential to make a demand in favor of Dantes.

Villefort retained his place, but his marriage was put off until a more favorable opportunity. If the emperor remained on the throne, Gerard required a different alliance to aid his career; if Louis XVIII. returned, the influence of M. Saint-Meran and himself became double, and the marriage must be still more suitable.

The deputy-procureur was, therefore, the first magistrate of Marseilles, when one morning his door opened, and M. Morrel was announced.

Any one else would have hastened to receive him, but Villefort was a man of ability, and he knew this would be a sign of weakness. He made Morrel wait in the antechamber, although he had no one with him, for the simple reason that the king's procureur always makes every one wait; and after a quarter of an hour passed in reading the papers, he ordered M. Morrel to be admitted.

Morrel expected Villefort would be dejected: he found him, as he had found him six weeks before, calm, firm,

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and full of that glacial politeness, that most insurmountable barrier, which separates the well-bred and the vulgar man.

He had penetrated into Villefort's cabinet, convinced the magistrate would tremble at the sight of him. On the contrary, he felt a cold shudder all over him when he beheld Villefort seated, his elbow on his desk, and his head leaning on his hand. He stopped at the door.

Villefort gazed at him as if he had some difficulty in recognizing him; then, after a brief interval, during which the honest shipowner turned his hat in his hands:

"M. Morrel, I believe?" said Villefort.

"Yes, sir."

"Come nearer," said the magistrate, with a patronizing wave of the hand; "and tell me to what circumstance I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Do you not guess, monsieur?" asked Morrel.

"Not in the least; but if I can serve you in any way I shall be delighted."

"Everything depends on you."

"Explain yourself, pray."

"Monsieur," said Morrel, recovering his assurance as he proceeded, "do you recollect that a few days before the landing of his majesty the emperor, I came to intercede for a young man, the mate of my ship, who was accused of being concerned in a correspondence with the Isle of Elba, and what was the other day a crime is to-day a title to favor; you then served Louis XVIII. and you did not show any favor—it was your duty; to-day you serve Napoleon, and you ought to protect him—it is equally your duty; I come, therefore, to ask what has become of him?"

Villefort made a violent effort. "What is his name?" said he; "tell me his name."

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"Edmond Dantes."

Villefort would evidently rather have stood opposite the muzzle of a pistol at five-and-twenty paces, than have heard this name pronounced; but he betrayed no emotion.

"Dantes!" repeated he; "Dantes?"

"Yes, monsieur."

Villefort opened a large register, then went to a table, from the table turned to his registers, and then turning to Morrel:

"Are you quite sure you are not mistaken, monsieur?" said he, in the most natural tone in the world.

Had Morrel been a more quick-sighted man, or better versed in these matters, he would have been surprised at the king's procureur answering him on such a subject, instead of referring him to the governors of the prison or the prefect of the department. But Morrel, disappointed in his expectations of exciting fear, saw only in its place condescension. Villefort had calculated rightly.

"No," said Morrel, "I am not mistaken. I have known him ten years, and the last four he has been in my service. Do you not recollect, I came about six weeks ago to beseech your clemency, as I come to-day to beseech your justice; you received me very coldly? Oh! the royalists were very severe with the Bonapartists in those days."

"Monsieur," returned Villefort, "I was then a royalist because I believed the Bourbons not only the heirs to the throne but the chosen of the nation. The miraculous return of Napoleon has conquered me; the legitimate monarch is he who is loved by his people."

"That's right!" cried Morrel. "I like to hear you speak thus; and I augur well for Edmond from it."

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"Wait a moment," said Villefort, turning over the leaves of a register.

"I have it! a sailor, who was about to marry a young Catalan girl. I recollect now, it was a very serious charge."

"How so?"

"You know that when he left here he was taken to the Palais de Justice."

"Well?"

"I made my report to the authorities at Paris, and a week after he was carried off."

"Carried off!" said Morrel. "What can they have done with him?"

"Oh! he has been taken to Fenestrelles, to Pignerol, or to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite. Some fine morning he will return to assume the command of your vessel."

"Come when he will, it shall be kept for him. But how is it he is not already returned? It seems to me the first care of the government should be to set at liberty those who have suffered for their adherence to it."

"Do not be too hasty, M. Morrel," replied Villefort. "The order of imprisonment came from high authority and the order of his liberation must proceed from the same source: and, as Napoleon has scarcely been reinstated a fortnight, the letters have not yet been forwarded."

"But," said Morrel, "is there no way of expediting all these formalities of releasing him from his arrest?"

"There has been no arrest."

"How?"

"It is sometimes essential to government to cause a man's disappearance without leaving any traces, so that no written forms or documents may defeat their wishes."

"It might be so under the Bourbons; but at present—"

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"It is always the same, my dear Morrel, since the reign of Louis XIV. The emperor is more strict in prison discipline than even Louis himself, and the number of prisoners whose names are not on the register is incalculable."

Had Morrel even any suspicions, so much kindness would have dispelled them.

"Well, M. de Villefort, how would you advise me to act?" asked he.

"Petition the minister."

"Oh, I know what that is; the minister receives two hundred every day, and does not read three."

"That is true; but he will read a petition countersigned and presented by me."

"And will you undertake to deliver it?"

"With the greatest pleasure. Dantes was then guilty, and now he is innocent, and it is as much my duty to free him as it was to condemn him."

"But how shall I address the minister?"

"Sit down there," said Villefort, giving up his place to Morrel, "and write what I dictate."

"Will you be so good?"

"Certainly. But lose no time; we have lost too much already."

"That is true. Only think that perhaps this poor young man is pining in captivity."

Villefort shuddered at this picture, but he was too far gone to recede. Dantes must be crushed beneath the weight of Villefort's ambition.

Villefort dictated a petition, in which, from an excellent intention, no doubt, Dantes's services were exaggerated, and he was made out one of the most active agents of Napoleon's return. It was evident that at the sight of this document the minister would instantly release him.

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The petition finished, Villefort read it.

"That will do," said he; "leave the rest to me."

"Will the petition go soon?"

"To-day."

"Countersigned by you?"

"The best thing I can do will be to certify the truth of the contents of your petition."

And, sitting down, Villefort wrote the certificate at the bottom.

"What more is to be done?"

"I will answer for everything."

This assurance charmed Morrel, who took leave of Villefort, and hastened to announce to old Dantes that he would soon see his son.

As for Villefort, instead of sending it to Paris, he carefully preserved the petition that so fearfully compromised Dantes, in the hopes of an event that seemed not unlikely—that is, a second restoration.

Dantes remained a prisoner, and heard not the noise of the fall of Louis XVIII.'s throne.

Twice during the Hundred Days had Morrel renewed his demand, and twice had Villefort soothed him with promises. At last there was Waterloo, and Morrel came no more: he had done all that was in his power, and any fresh attempt would only compromise himself uselessly.

Louis XVIII. remounted the throne; Villefort demanded and obtained the situation of king's procureur at Toulouse, and a fortnight afterwards married Renee.

Danglars comprehended the full extent of the wretched fate that overwhelmed Dantes, and, like all men of small abilities, he termed this *a decree of Providence.*

But when Napoleon returned to Paris, Danglars's heart

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failed him, and he feared at every instant to behold Dantes eager for vengeance. He therefore, informed M. Morrel of his wish to quit the sea, and obtained a recommendation from him to a Spanish merchant, into whose service he entered at the end of March—that is, ten or twelve days after Napoleon's return. He then left for Madrid, and was no more heard of.

Fernand understood nothing except that Dantes was absent. What had become of him? He cared not to inquire. Only during the respite the absence of his rival afforded him, he reflected partly on the means of deceiving Mercedes as to the cause of the absence, partly on plans of emigration and abduction, as from time to time he sat sad and motionless on the summit of Cape Pharo, at the spot from which Marseilles and the village des Catalans are visible, watching for the apparition of a young and handsome man, who was for him also the messenger of vengeance. Fernand's mind was made up: he would shoot Dantes, and then kill himself. But Fernand was mistaken; a man of his disposition never kills himself, for he constantly hopes.

During this time the empire made a last appeal, and every man in France capable of bearing arms rushed to obey the summons of their emperor.

Fernand departed with the rest, bearing with him the terrible thought that perhaps his rival was behind him, and would marry Mercedes.

Had Fernand really meant to kill himself, he would have done so when he parted from Mercedes. His devotion, and the compassion he showed for her misfortunes, produced the effect they always produce on noble minds; Mercedes had always had a sincere regard for Fernand, was now strengthened by gratitude.

"My brother," said she, as she placed his knapsack

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on his shoulder, "be careful of yourself; for if you are killed I shall be alone in the world."

These words infused a ray of hope into Fernand's heart. Should Dantes not return, Mercedes might one day be his. Mercedes was left alone to gaze on this vast plain that had never seemed so barren, and the sea that had never seemed so vast.

Sometimes she stood mute and motionless as a statue, gazing towards Marseilles; at other times, gazing on the sea, and debating as to whether it were not better to cast herself into the abysses of the ocean, and thus end her woes.

It was not want of courage that prevented her putting this resolution into execution; but her religious feelings came to her aid, and saved her.

Caderousse was, like Fernand, enrolled in the army; but, being married, and eight years older, he was sent to the frontier.

Old Dantes, who was only sustained by hope, lost all hope at Napoleon's downfall. Five months after he had been separated from his son, and almost at the very hour at which he was arrested, he breathed his last in Mercedes's arms.

M. Morrel paid the expenses of his funeral, and the few small debts the poor old man had contracted.

There was more than benevolence in this action; there was courage; for to assist, even on his death-bed, the father of so dangerous a Bonapartist as Dantes was stigmatized as a crime.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE TWO PRISONERS.

A YEAR after Louis XVIII.'s restoration, a visit was made by the inspector-general of prisons.

Dantes heard, from the recesses of his cell, the noises made by the preparations for receiving him—sounds that at the depth where he lay, would have been inaudible to any but the ear of a prisoner, who could distinguish the plash of the drop of water that every hour fell from the roof of his dungeon. He guessed something uncommon was passing among the living; but he had so long ceased to have any intercourse with the world that he looked upon himself as dead.

The inspector visited the cells and dungeons, one after another, of several of the prisoners, whose good behavior or stupidity recommended them to the clemency of the government; the inspector inquired how they were fed, and if they had anything to demand. The universal response was, that the fare was detestable, and that they required their freedom.

The inspector asked if they had anything else to demand. They shook their heads. What could they desire beyond their liberty?

The inspector turned smilingly to the governor.

"I do not know what reason government can assign for these useless visits: when you see one prisoner you

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see all—always the same thing—ill-fed and innocent. Are there any others?"

"Yes, the dangerous and mad prisoners are in the dungeons."

"Let us visit them," said the inspector, with an air of fatigue. "I must fulfil my mission. Let us descend."

"Let us first send for two soldiers," said the governor. "The prisoners sometimes, through mere uneasiness of life, and in order to be sentenced to death, commit acts of useless violence, and you might fall a victim."

"Take all needful precautions," replied the inspector.

Two soldiers were accordingly sent for, and the inspector descended a stair so foul, so humid, so dark, that the very sight affected the eye, the smell, and the respiration.

"Oh," cried the inspector, "who can live here?"

"A most dangerous conspirator, a man we are ordered to keep the most strict watch over, as he is daring and resolute."

"He is alone?"

"Certainly."

"How long has he been there?"

"Nearly a year."

"Was he placed here when he first arrived?"

"No, not until he attempted to kill the turnkey."

"To kill the turnkey?"

"Yes the very one who is lighting us—is it not true, Antoine?" asked the governor.

"True enough; he wanted to kill me!" replied the turnkey.

"He must be mad, "said the inspector.

"He is worse than that; he is a devil!" returned the turnkey.

"Shall I complain of him?" demanded the inspector.

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"Oh, no, it is quite useless. Besides, he is almost mad now, and in another year he will be quite so."

"So much the better for him; he will suffer less," said the inspector.

He was, as this remark shows, a man full of philanthropy and in every way fit for his office.

"You are right, sir," replied the governor: "and this remark proves that you have deeply considered the subject. Now we have in a dungeon about twenty feet distant, and to which you descend by another stair, an abbe, ancient leader of a party in Italy, who has been here since 1811, and in 1813 he went mad, and the change is astonishing. He used to weep, he now laughs; he grew thin, he now grows fat. You had better see him, for his madness is amusing."

"I will see them both," returned the inspector; "I must conscientiously perform my duty."

This was the inspector's first visit: he wished to display his authority.

"Let us visit this one first," added he.

"Willingly," replied the governor, and he signed to the turnkey to open the door. At the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the creaking of the hinges, Dantes, who was crouching in the corner of the dungeon, raised his head.

At the sight of a stranger, lighted by two turnkeys, accompanied by two soldiers, and to whom the governor spoke bareheaded, Dantes, who guessed the truth and that the moment to address himself to the superior authorities was come, sprang forward with clasped hands.

The soldiers presented their bayonets, for they thought he was about to attack the inspector, and the latter recoiled two or three steps. Dantes saw he was repre-

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sented as a dangerous prisoner. Then infusing all the humility he possessed into his eyes and voice, he addressed the inspector, and sought to inspire him with pity.

The inspector listened attentively, then turning to the governor, observed, "He will become religious—he is already more gentle; he is afraid and retreated before bayonets—madmen are not afraid of anything; I made some curious observations on this at Charenton." Then turning to the prisoner, "What do you demand?" said he.

"What crime I have committed—to be tried: and if I am guilty I may be shot; if innocent, I may be set at liberty."

"Are you well fed?" said the inspector.

"I believe so— I know not, but that matters little; what matters really, not only to me, but to every one, is that an innocent man should languish in prison, the victim of an infamous denunciation."

"You are very humble to-day," remarked the governor, "you are not so always: the other day, for instance, when you tried to kill the turnkey."

"It is true, sir, and I beg his pardon, for he has always been very good to me: but I was mad."

"And you are not so any longer?"

"No! captivity has subdued me—I have been here so long."

"So long? when were you arrested, then?" asked the inspector.

"The 28th February, 1815, at half-past two in the afternoon."

"To-day is the 30th of June, 1816; why, it is but seventeen months."

"Only seventeen months!" replied Dantes; "oh, you

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do not know what is seventeen months in prison!—seventeen ages rather, especially to a man who, like me, had arrived at the summit of his ambition—to a man who, like me, was on the point of marrying a woman he adored, who saw an honorable career open before him, and who loses all in an instant, who sees his prospects destroyed, and is ignorant of the fate of his affianced wife, and whether his aged father be still living! Seventeen months' captivity to a sailor accustomed to the boundless ocean is a worse punishment than human crime ever merited. Have pity on me, then, and ask for me, not indulgence, but a trial—let me know my crime and my sentence, for incertitude is worse than all."

"We shall see," said the inspector; then turning to the governor, "On my word, the poor devil touches me; you must show me the proofs against him."

"Certainly, but you will find terrible notes against him."

"Monsieur," continued Dantes, "I know it is not in your power to release me, but you can plead for me, you can have me tried, and that is all I ask."

"Light me, "said the inspector.

"Monsieur,"cried Dantes, "I can tell by your voice you are touched with pity; tell me at least to hope."

"I cannot tell you that," replied the inspector; "I can only promise to examine into your case."

"Oh, I am free!—then I am saved!"

"Who arrested you?"

"M. Villefort; see him, and hear what he says."

"M. Villefort is no longer at Marseilles, he is now at Toulouse."

"I am no longer surprised at my detention," murmured Dantes, "since my only protector is removed."

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"Had M. de Villefort any cause of personal dislike to you?"

"None; on the contrary, he was very kind to me."

"I can then rely on the notes he has left concerning you?"

"Entirely."

"That is well; wait patiently, then."

Dantes fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly.

The door closed, but this time a fresh inmate was left with Dantes, Hope.

"Will you see the register at once," asked the governor, "or proceed to the other cell?"

"Let us visit them all," said the inspector; "if I once mounted the stairs I should never have the courage to descend."

"Ah, this one is not like the other, and his madness is less affecting than the reason of his neighbor."

"What is his folly?"

"He fancies he possesses an immense treasure; the first year he offered government a million of francs (£40,000) for his release, the second two, the third three, and so on progressively; he is now in his fifth year of captivity, he will ask to speak to you in private, and offer you five millions."

"How curious! what is his name?"

"L'Abbe Faria."

"No. 27," said the inspector.

"It is here; unlock the door, Antoine."

The turnkey obeyed, and the inspector gazed curiously into the chamber of the *mad abbe*.

In the centre of the cell, in a circle traced with a fragment of plaster detached from the wall, sat a man whose tattered garments scarcely covered him. He was drawing in this circle geometrical lines, and seemed as much

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absorbed in his problem as Archimedes when the soldier of Marcellus slew him.

He did not move at the sound of the door, and continued his problem until the flash of the torches lighted up with an unwonted glare the sombre walls of his cell, then raising his head he perceived with astonishment the number of persons in his cell.

He hastily seized the coverlid of his bed and wrapt it around him.

"What do you demand?" said the inspector.

"I, monsieur!" replied the abbe, with an air of surprise, "I demand nothing."

"You do not understand," continued the inspector; "I am sent here by government to visit the prisoners, and hear the requests of the prisoners."

"Oh, that is different," cried the abbe, "and we shall understand each other, I hope."

"There now," whispered the governor, "it is just as I told you."

"Monsieur," continued the prisoner, "I am the Abbe Faria, born at Rome. I was for twenty years Cardinal Spada's secretary. I was arrested, why I know not, in 1811; since then I have demanded my liberty from the Italian and French governments."

"Why from the French government?"

"Because I was arrested at Piombino, and I presume that, like Milan and Florence, Piombino has become the capital of some French department."

"Ah!" said the inspector, "you have not the latest intelligence from Italy."

"They date from the day on which I was arrested," returned the Abbe Faria; "and as the emperor had created the kingdom of Rome for his infant son, I presume that he has realized the dream of Machiavel and

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The Mad Abbe.

Photo-Etching — From Drawing by Frank T. Merrill.

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Cæsar Borgia, which was to make Italy one vast kingdom."

"Monsieur," returned the inspector, "Providence has changed this gigantic plan you advocate so warmly."

"It is the only means of rendering Italy happy and independent."

"Very possibly, only I am not come to discuss politics, but to inquire if you have anything to ask or complain of."

"The food is the same as in other prisons—that is very bad—the lodging is very unwholesome, but on the whole passable for a dungeon; but it is not that which I speak of, but a secret I have to reveal of the greatest importance."

"We are coming to the point," whispered the governor.

"It is for that reason I am delighted to see you," continued the abbe, "although you have disturbed me in a most important calculation, which if it succeeded, would possibly change Newton's system. Could you allow me a few words in private?"

"What did I tell you?" said the governor.

"You knew him," returned the inspector.

"What you ask is impossible, monsieur," continued he, addressing Faria.

"But said the abbe, "I would speak to you of a large sum, amounting to five millions."

"The very sum you named," whispered, in his turn, the inspector.

"However," continued Faria, perceiving the inspector was about to depart, "it is not absolutely necessary we should be alone; monsieur the governor can be present."

"Unfortunately," said the governor, "I know before-

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hand what you are about to say: it concerns your treasures, does it not?"

Faria fixed his eyes on him with an expression that would have convinced any one else of his sanity.

"Doubtless," said he; "of what else should I speak?"

"Monsieur l'Inspecteur," continued the governor, "I can tell you the story as well, for it has been dinned in my ears for the last four or five years."

"That proves," returned the abbe, "that you are like the idols of holy writ, who have ears and hear not."

"The government does not want your treasures," replied the inspector; "keep them till you are liberated."

The abbe's eyes glistened; he seized the inspector's hands.

"But what if I am not liberated," cried he, "and am detained here until my death? Had not the government better profit by it? I will offer six millions, and I will content myself with the rest."

"On my word," said the inspector, in a low tone, "had I not been told beforehand this man was mad, I should believe what he says."

"I am not mad," replied Faria, with that acuteness of hearing peculiar to prisoners. "The treasure I speak of really exists, and I offer to sign a treaty with you, in which I promise to lead you to the spot you shall dig, and, if I deceive you, bring me here again. I ask no more."

The governor laughed. "Is the spot far from here?"

"A hundred leagues."

"It is not a bad idea," said the governor.

"If every prisoner took it into his head to travel a hundred leagues, and their guardians consented to accompany them, they would have a capital chance of escaping."

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"The scheme is well known," said the governor; "and M. l'Abbe has not even the merit of its invention."

Then turning to Faria:

"I inquired if you are well fed?" said he.

"Swear to me," replied Faria, "to free me if what I tell you prove true, and I will stay here whilst you go to the spot."

"Are you well fed?" repeated the inspector.

"Monsieur, you run no risk, for, as I told you, I will stay here, so there is no chance of my escaping."

"You do not reply to my question," replied the inspector impatiently.

"Nor you to mine," cried the abbe. "You will not accept my gold; I will keep it for myself. You refuse me my liberty; God will give it me."

And the abbe, casting away his coverlid, resumed his place and continued his calculations.

"What is he doing there?" said the inspector?

"Counting his treasures," replied the governor.

Faria replied to this sarcasm by a glance of profound contempt.

"He has been wealthy once, perhaps?" said the inspector.

"Or dreamed he was, and awoke mad."

"After all," said the inspector, "if he had been rich he would not have been here."

Thus finished the adventure of the Abbe Faria. He remained in his cell, and this visit only increased the belief of his insanity.

Caligula or Nero, those treasure-seekers, those desirous of the impossible, would have accorded to the poor wretch, in exchange for his wealth, the liberty and the air he so earnestly prayed for.

But the kings of modern ages, retained within the

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limits of probability, have neither the courage nor the desire. They fear the ear that hears their orders, and the eye that scrutinizes their actions. Formerly they believed themselves sprung from Jupiter, and shielded by their birth; but nowadays they are not inviolable.

It has always been against the policy of despotic governments to suffer the victims of their policy to reappear. As the Inquisition rarely suffered their victims to be seen with their limbs distorted, and their flesh lacerated by torture, so madness is always concealed in its cell, from whence, should it depart, it is conveyed to some gloomy hospital, where the doctor recognizes neither man nor mind in the mutilated being the jailer delivers to him.

The very madness of the Abbe Faria, gone mad in prison, condemned him to perpetual captivity.

The inspector kept his word with Dantes; he examined the register, and found the following note concerning him:

EDMOND DANTES. { Violent Bonapartist; took an active part in the return from Elba. The greatest watchfulness and care to be exercised.

This note was in a different hand from the rest, which proved it had been added since his confinement.

The inspector could not contend against this accusation; he simply wrote:

"Nothing to be done."

This visit had infused new vigor into Dantes: he had, till then, forgotten the date; but now with a fragment of plaster, he wrote the date, 30th July, 1816; and made a mark every day, in order not to lose his reckoning again. Days and weeks passed away, then months—Dantes still waited; he at first expected to be freed in a fortnight. This fortnight expired; he reflected

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the inspector would do nothing until his return to Paris, and that he would not reach there until his circuit was finished; he, therefore, fixed three months; three months passed away, and then six more. During these ten months no favorable change had taken place; and Dantes began to fancy the inspector's visit was but a dream and illusion of the brain.

At the expiration of a year the governor was changed: he had obtained the government of Ham. He took with him several of his subordinates, and amongst them Dantes' jailer. A fresh governor arrived: it would have been too tedious to acquire the names of the prisoners, he learned their numbers instead.

This horrible place consisted of fifty chambers; their inhabitants were designated by the number of their chamber; and the unhappy young man was no longer called Edmond Dantes, he was now number 34.

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CHAPTER XV.

NUMBER 34 AND NUMBER 27.

DANTES passed through all the degrees of misfortune that prisoners, forgotten in their dungeons, suffer. He commenced with pride, a natural consequence of hope, and a consciousness of innocence; then he began to doubt his own innocence, which justified in some measure the governor's belief in his mental alienation; and then falling into the opposite extreme, he supplicated, not heaven, but his jailer.

Dantes entreated to be removed from his present dungeon into another: for a change, however disadvantageous, was still a change, and would afford him some amusement. He entreated to be allowed to walk about, to have books and instruments. Nothing was granted; no matter, he asked all the same. He accustomed himself to speak to his fresh jailer, although he was, if possible, more taciturn than the former; but still to speak to a man, even though mute, was something. Dantes spoke for the sake of hearing his own voice; he had tried to speak when alone, but the sound of his voice terrified him. Often before his captivity Dantes' mind had revolted at the idea of those assemblages of prisoners, composed of thieves, vagabonds, and murderers. He now wished to be amongst them in order to see some other face besides that of his jailer; he sighed for

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the galleys, with their infamous costume, their chain, and the brand on the shoulder. The galley slaves breathed the fresh air of heaven, and saw each other. They were very happy.

He besought the jailer one day to let him have a companion, were it even the mad abbe.

The jailer, though rude and hardened by the constant sight of so much suffering, was yet a man. At the bottom of his heart he had often compassionated the unhappy young man who suffered thus; and he laid the request of number 34 before the governor, but the latter sapiently imagined that Dantes wished to conspire, or attempt an escape, and refused his request.

Dantes had exhausted all human resources; and he then turned to God.

All the pious ideas that had been so long forgotten returned; he recollected the prayers his mother had taught him, and discovered a new meaning in every word. For in prosperity prayers seem but a mere assemblage of words until the day when misfortune comes to explain to the unhappy sufferer the sublime language by which he invokes the pity of Heaven! He prayed, and prayed aloud, no longer terrified at the sound of his voice; for he fell into a species of ecstasy. He laid every action of his life before the Almighty, proposed tasks to accomplish, and at the end of every prayer introduced the entreaty oftener addressed to man than to God, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Spite of his earnest prayers, Dantes remained a prisoner.

Then a gloomy feeling took possession of him. He was simple and without education; he could not, therefore, in the solitude of his dungeon, and of his own

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thoughts, reconstruct the ages that had passed, reanimate the nations that had perished, and rebuild the ancient cities that imagination renders so vast and so stupendous, and that pass before our eyes, illumined by the fires of heaven, as in Martin's pictures. He could not do this, he whose past life was so short, whose present so melancholy, and his future so doubtful. Nineteen years of light to reflect upon in eternal darkness. No distraction could come to his aid; his energetic spirit, that would have exulted in thus revisiting the past, was imprisoned like an eagle in a cage. He clung to one idea, that of his happiness, destroyed without apparent cause by an unheard-of fatality; he considered and reconsidered this idea, devoured it (thus to speak) as Ugolino devours the skull of the Archbishop Roger in the Inferno of Dante.

Rage succeeded to this. Dantes uttered blasphemies that made his jailer recoil with horror, dashed himself furiously against the walls of his prison, attacked everything, and chiefly himself, and the least thing, a grain of sand, a straw, or a breath of air that annoyed him. Then the letter he had seen that Villefort had showed to him recurred to his mind, and every line seemed visible in fiery letters on the wall, like the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* of Belshazzar. He said that it was the vengeance of man, and not of Heaven, that had thus plunged him into the deepest misery. He devoted these unknown persecutors to the most horrible tortures he could imagine, and found them all insufficient, because after torture came death, and after death, if not repose, at least that insensibility that resembles it.

By dint of constantly dwelling on the idea that repose was death, and, in order to punish, other tortures than death must be invented, he began to reflect on suicide.

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Unhappy he, who, on the brink of misfortune, broods over these ideas!

It is one of those dead seas that seem clear and smooth to the eye: but he who unwarily ventures within its embrace finds himself entangled in a quagmire that attracts and swallows him. Once thus ensnared, unless the protecting hand of God snatch him thence, all is over, and his struggles but tend to hasten his destruction. This state of mental anguish is, however, less terrible than the sufferings that precede and the punishment that awaits it — a sort of consolation that points to the yawning abyss, at the bottom of which is darkness and obscurity.

Edmond found some solace in these ideas. All his sorrows, all his sufferings, with their train of gloomy spectres, fled from his cell, where the angel of death seemed about to enter. Dantes reviewed with composure his past life, and looking forward with terror to his future existence chose that middle line that seemed to afford him a refuge.

"Sometimes," said he, "in my voyages, when I was a man and commanded other men, I have seen the heavens become overcast, the sea rage and foam, the storm arise, and, like a monstrous bird, cover the sky with its wings. Then I felt that my vessel was a vain refuge that trembled and shook before the tempest. Soon the fury of the waves and the sight of the sharp rocks announced the approach of death, and death then terrified me, and I used all my skill and intelligence as a man and a sailor to escape. But I did so because I was happy, because I had not courted death, because this repose on a bed of rocks and sea-weeds seemed terrible, because I was unwilling that I, a creature made for the service of God, should serve for food to the gulls and

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ravens. But now it is different; I have lost all that bound me to life; death smiles and invites me to repose; I die after my own manner; I die exhausted and broken-spirited, as I fall asleep when I have paced three thousand times round my cell."

No sooner had this idea taken possession of him than he became more composed, arranged his couch to the best of his power, ate little, and slept less, and found his existence almost supportable, because he felt he could throw it off at pleasure, like a worn-out garment. He had two means of dying; the one was to hang himself with his handkerchief to the stanchions of the window; the other, to refuse food and starve himself. But the former means was repugnant to him. Dantes had always entertained the greatest horror of pirates who are hung up to the yard-arm; he would not die by what seemed an infamous death; he resolved to adopt the second, and began that day to execute his resolve. Nearly four years had passed away; at the end of the second he had ceased to mark the lapse of time.

Dantes said, "I wish to die," and had chosen the manner of his death; and fearful of changing his mind, he had taken an oath to die. "When my morning and evening meals are brought," thought he, "I will cast them out of my window, and I shall be believed to have eaten them."

He kept his word; twice a day he cast out, by the barred aperture, the provisions his jailer brought him, at first gayly, then with deliberation, and at last with regret; nothing but the recollection of his oath gave him strength to proceed. Hunger rendered these viands, once so repugnant, acceptable to him; he held the plate in his hand for an hour at a time, and gazed on the morsel of bad meat, of tainted fish, of black and mouldy

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bread. It was the last struggle of life, which occasionally vanquished his resolve; then his dungeon seemed less sombre, his prospects less desperate. He was still young, he was only four or five and twenty: he had nearly fifty years to live. What unforeseen events might not open his prison door and restore him to liberty? Then he raised to his lips the repast like a voluntary Tantalus; he refused himself; but he thought of his oath, and he would not break it. He persisted, until, at last, he had not sufficient force to cast his supper out of the loophole.

The next morning he could not see or hear: the jailer feared he was dangerously ill. Edmond hoped he was dying.

The day passed away thus: Edmond felt a species of stupor creeping over him, the gnawing pain at his stomach had ceased, his thirst had abated; when he closed his eyes he saw myriads of lights dancing before them, like the meteors that play about the marshes. It was the twilight of that mysterious country called Death.

Suddenly about nine o'clock in the evening, Edmond heard a hollow sound in the wall against which he was lying.

So many loathsome animals inhabited the prison, that their noise did not, in general, awake him; but whether abstinence had quickened his faculties, or whether the noise was really louder than usual, Edmond raised his head and listened.

It was a continual scratching, as if made by a huge claw, a powerful tooth, or some iron instrument, attacking the stones.

Although weakened, the young man's brains instantly recurred to the idea that haunts all prisoners—

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liberty: It seemed to him that Heaven had at length taken pity on him and had sent this noise to warn him on the very brink of the abyss. Perhaps one of those beloved ones he had so often thought of was thinking of him and striving to diminish the distance that separated them.

No! no! doubtless he was deceived, and it was but one of those dreams that forerun death.

Edmond still heard the sound. It lasted nearly three hours; he then heard a noise of something falling, and all was silent.

Some hours afterwards, it began nearer and more distinct; Edmond became already interested in that labor, when the jailer entered.

For a week that he had resolved to die, and for four days that he had put this resolution into execution, Edmond had not spoken to this man, had not answered him when he inquired what was the matter with him, and turned his face to the wall when he looked too curiously at him; but now the jailer might hear this noise and put an end to it, thus destroying a ray of something like hope that soothed his last moments.

The jailer brought him his breakfast; Dantes raised himself up, and began to speak on everything: on the bad quality of his food, on the coldness of his dungeon, grumbling and complaining in order to have an excuse for speaking louder, and wearying the patience of his jailer, who had solicited some broth and white bread for his prisoner, and who had brought it.

Fortunately he fancied Dantes was delirious; and placing his food on the rickety table, he withdrew.

Edmond listened, and the sound became more and more distinct.

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There can be no doubt, thought he; it is some prisoner, who is striving to obtain his freedom.

Suddenly another idea took possession of his mind, so used to misfortune, that it could scarcely understand hope; yet this idea possessed him, that the noise arose from the workmen the governor had ordered to repair the neighboring dungeon.

It was easy to ascertain this; but how could he risk the question? It was easy to call his jailer's attention to the noise, and watch his countenance as he listened, but might he not by this means betray interests far more precious than this short-lived satisfaction? Unfortunately, Edmond's brain was still so feeble that he could not bend his thoughts to anything in particular.

He saw but one means of restoring lucidity and clearness to his judgment. He turned his eyes towards the soup his jailer had brought him, rose, staggered towards it, raised the vessel to his lips and drank of the contents with a feeling of indescribable pleasure. He had often heard that shipwrecked persons had died through having eagerly devoured too much food; Edmond replaced on the table the bread he was about to devour, and returned to his couch: he did not wish to die. He soon felt that his ideas became again collected; he could think and strengthen his thoughts by reasoning. Then he said to himself: "I must put this to the test, but without compromising anybody. If it is a workman I need but knock against the wall, and he will cease to work in order to find out who is knocking, and why he does so, but as his occupation is sanctioned by the governor, he will soon resume it; if, on the contrary, it is a prisoner, the noise I make will alarm him: he will cease, and not recommence until he thinks every one is asleep."

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Edmond rose again, but this time his legs did not tremble, and his eyes were free from mists; he advanced to a corner of his dungeon, detached a stone, and with it knocked against the wall where the sound came. He struck thrice.

At the first blow the sound ceased, as if by magic.

Edmond listened intently, an hour passed, two hours passed, and no sound was heard from the wall, all was silent there.

Full of hope, Edmond swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread and water, and, thanks to the excellence of his constitution, found himself well-nigh recovered.

The day passed away in utter silence—night came without the noise having recommenced.

"It is a prisoner," said Edmond, joyfully.

The night passed in perfect silence. Edmond did not close his eyes.

In the morning the jailer brought him fresh provisions, he had already devoured those of the previous day; he ate these, listening anxiously for the sound, walking round and round his cell, shaking the iron bars of the loophole, restoring, by exercise, vigor and agility to his limbs, and preparing himself thus for his future destiny.

At intervals he listened if the noise had not begun again, and grew impatient at the prudence of the prisoner, who did not guess he had been disturbed by a captive as anxious for liberty as himself.

Three days passed—seventy-two long, tedious hours!

At length one evening, as the jailer was visiting him for the last time that night, Dantes fancied he heard an almost imperceptible movement among the stones.

Edmond recoiled from the wall, walked up and down his cell to collect his thoughts, and replaced his ear against the wall.

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There could be no doubt something was passing on the other side; the prisoner had discovered the danger and had substituted the lever for the chisel.

Encouraged by this discovery, Edmond determined to assist the indefatigable laborer. He began by moving his bed, and sought with his eyes for anything with which he could pierce the wall, penetrate the cement, and displace a stone.

He saw nothing. He had no knife or sharp instrument; the grating of his window alone was iron, and he had too often assured himself of its solidity. All his furniture consisted of a bed, a chair, a table, a pail, and a jug. The bed had iron clamps, but they were screwed to the wood, and it would have required a screw-driver to take them off. The table and chair had nothing; the pail had had a handle, but that had been removed.

Dantes had but one resource, which was to break the jug, and with one of the sharp fragments attack the wall. He let the jug fall on the floor, and it broke in pieces.

Dantes concealed two or three of the sharpest fragments in his bed, leaving the rest on the floor. The breaking of his jug was too natural an accident to excite suspicion. Edmond had all the night to work in, but in the darkness he could not do much, and he soon felt his instrument was blunted against something hard. He pushed back his bed and awaited the day.

All night he heard the subterranean workman, who continued to mine his way. The day came; the jailer entered. Dantes told him the jug had fallen from his hands in drinking, and the jailer went grumblingly to fetch another, without giving himself the trouble to remove the fragments of the broken one.

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He returned speedily, recommended the prisoner to be more careful, and departed.

Dantes heard joyfully the key grate in the lock. He listened until the sound of steps died away, and then, hastily displacing his bed, saw by the faint light that penetrated into his cell that he had labored uselessly the previous evening in attacking the stone instead of removing the plaster that surrounded it.

The damp had rendered it friable, and Dantes saw joyfully the plaster detach itself; in small morsels, it is true, but at the end of half an hour he had scraped off a handful; a mathematician might have calculated that in two years, supposing that the rock was not encountered, a passage, twenty feet long, and two feet broad, might be formed. The prisoner reproached himself with not having thus employed the hours he had passed in prayers and despair.

In six years (the space he had been confined) what might he not have accomplished?

In three days he had succeeded, with the utmost precaution, in removing the cement, and exposing the stone; the wall was formed of rough stones, to give solidity to which were imbedded, at intervals, blocks of hewn stone. It was one of these he had uncovered, and which he must remove from the socket.

Dantes strove to do so with his nails, but they were too weak. The fragments of the jug broke, and after an hour of useless toil Dantes paused.

Was he to be thus stopped at the beginning, and was he to wait inactive until his fellow-workman had completed his toils?

Suddenly an idea occurred to him, he smiled, and the perspiration dried on his forehead.

The jailer always brought Dantes' soup in an iron

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saucepan; this saucepan contained the soup of a second prisoner, for Dantes had remarked that it was either quite full, or half empty, according as the turnkey gave it to himself or his companion first.

The handle of this saucepan was of iron. Dantes would have given ten years of his life in exchange for it.

The jailer poured the contents of this saucepan into Dantes' plate, who, after eating his soup with a wooden spoon, washed the plate, which thus served for every day. In the evening Dantes placed his plate on the ground near the door; the jailer as he entered stepped upon it and broke it.

This time he could not blame Dantes. He was wrong to leave it there, but the jailer was wrong not to have looked before him.

The jailer, therefore, contented himself with grumbling. Then he looked about him for something to pour the soup into; Dantes' whole furniture consisted of one plate—there was no alternative.

"Leave the saucepan," said Dantes, "you can take it away when you bring me my breakfast."

This advice was to the jailer's taste, as it spared him the necessity of ascending, descending, and ascending again.

He left the saucepan.

Dantes was beside himself with joy. He rapidly devoured his food, and after waiting an hour lest the jailer should change his mind and return, he removed his bed, took the handle of the saucepan, inserted the handle between the hewn stone and rough stones of the wall, and employed it as a lever. A slight oscillation showed Dantes all went well.

At the end of an hour the stone was extricated from

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the wall, leaving a cavity of a foot and a half in diameter.

Dantes carefully collected the plaster, carried it into the corners of his cell, and covered it with earth. Then wishing to make the best use of the night, in which chance, or rather, his own stratagem, had placed so precious an instrument in his hands, he continued to work without ceasing.

At the dawn of day he replaced the stone, pushed his bed against the wall, and lay down.

The breakfast consisted of a piece of bread; the jailer entered and placed the bread on the table.

"Well, you do not bring me another plate?" said Dantes.

"No," replied the turnkey, "you destroy everything; first you break your jug, then you make me break your plate; if all the prisoners followed your example the government would be ruined; I shall leave you the saucepan, and pour your soup into that, so for the future I hope you will not be so destructive to your furniture."

Dantes raised his eyes to heaven, clasped his hands beneath the coverlid, and prayed.

He felt more gratitude for the possession of this piece of iron than he had ever felt for anything; he had however remarked that the prisoner on the other side had ceased to labor.

No matter, this was a greater reason for proceeding; if his neighbor would not come to him, he would go to him.

All day he toiled on untiringly, and by the evening he had succeeded in extracting ten handfuls of plaster and fragments of stone.

When the hour for his jailer's visit arrived, Dantes straightened the handle of the saucepan as well as he

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could, and placed it in its accustomed place. The turnkey poured his ration of soup into it, together with the fish, for thrice a week the prisoners were made to abstain from meat: this would have been a method of reckoning time had not Dantes long ceased to do so.

Having poured out the soup, the turnkey retired.

Dantes wished to ascertain whether his neighbor had really ceased to work.

He listened.

All was silent as it had been for the last three days.

Dantes sighed; it was evident that his neighbor distrusted him.

However, he toiled on all the night, without being discouraged; but after two or three hours he encountered an obstacle.

The iron made no impression, but met with a smooth surface; Dantes touched it and found it was a beam.

This beam crossed, or rather blocked up the hole Dantes had made.

It was necessary therefore to dig above or under it.

The unhappy young man had not thought of this.

"Oh, my God! my God!" murmured he, "I have so earnestly prayed to you, that I hoped my prayers had been heard. After having deprived me of my liberty, after having deprived me of death, after having recalled me to existence, my God, have pity on me, and do not let me die in despair!"

"Who talks of God and despair at the same time?" said a voice that seemed to come from beneath the earth, and, deadened by the distance, sounded hollow and sepulchral in the young man's ears.

Edmond's hair stood on an end and he rose on his knees. "Ah!" said he, "I hear a human voice." Edmond had not heard any one speak save his jailer for

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four or five years, and a jailer is not a man to a prisoner; he is a living door added to his door of oak, a barrier of flesh and blood added to his barriers of iron.

"In the name of Heaven," cried Dantes, "speak again, though the sound of your voice terrifies me."

"Who are you?" said the voice.

"An unhappy prisoner," replied Dantes, who made no hesitation in answering.

"Of what country?"

"A Frenchman."

"Your name?"

"Edmond Dantes."

"Your profession?"

"A sailor."

"How long have you been here?"

"Since the 28th of February, 1815."

"Your crime?"

"I am innocent."

"But of what are you accused?"

"Of having conspired to aid the emperor's return."

"How for the emperor's return? the emperor is no longer on the throne then?"

"He abdicated at Fontainebleau in 1814, and was sent to the island of Elba: but how long have you been here that you are ignorant of all this?"

"Since 1811."

Dantes shuddered, this man had been four years longer than himself in prison.

"Do not dig any more," said the voice; "only tell me how high up is your excavation?"

"On a level with the floor."

"How is it concealed?"

"Behind my bed."

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"Has your bed been moved since you have been a prisoner?"

"No."

"What does your chamber open on?"

"A corridor."

"And the corridor?"

"On a court."

"Alas!" murmured the voice.

"Oh, what is the matter?" cried Dantes.

"I am deceived, and the imperfection of my plans has ruined all. An error of a line in the plan has been equivalent to fifteen feet in reality, and I took the wall you are mining for the wall of the fortress."

"But then you were close to the sea?"

"That is what I hoped."

"And supposing you succeeded?"

"I should have thrown myself into the sea, gained one of the islands near here—the Isle de Daume or the Isle de Tiboulen, and then I was safe."

"Could you have swum so far?"

"Heaven would have given me strength, but now all is lost."

"All?"

"Yes; stop up your excavation carefully; do not work any more, and wait until you hear from me."

"Tell me at least who you are?"

"I am—I am Number 27."

"You mistrust me, then?" said Dantes.

Edmond fancied he heard a bitter laugh proceed from the unknown.

"Oh! I am a Christian," cried Dantes, guessing instinctively that this man meant to abandon him. "I swear to you by Him who died for us that naught shall induce me to breathe one syllable to my jailers, but I

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conjure you do not abandon me. If you do, I swear to you that I will dash my brains out against the wall, and you will have my death to reproach yourself with."

"How old are you? Your voice is that of a young man."

"I do not know my age, for I have not counted the years I have been here. All I do know is, that I was just nineteen when I was arrested, the 28th of February, 1815."

"Not quite twenty-six!" murmured the voice; "at that age he cannot be a traitor."

"Oh! no, no!" cried Dantes. "I swear to you again, rather than betray you they shall hew me to pieces!"

"You have done well to speak to me, and entreat me, for I was about to form another plan, and leave you; but your age reassures me. I will not forget you: expect me."

"When?"

"I must calculate our chances; I will give you the signal."

"But you will not leave me; you will come to me, or you will let me come to you. We will escape, and if we cannot escape, we will talk, you of those whom you love, and I of those whom I love. You must love somebody?"

"No, I am alone in the world."

"Then you will love me. If you are young, I will be your comrade; if you are old, I will be your son. I have a father who is seventy, if he yet lives; I only love him and a young girl called Mercedes. My father has not yet forgotten me, I am sure; but God alone knows if she loves me still; I shall love you as I loved my father."

"It is well," returned the voice; "to-morrow."

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These few words were uttered with an accent that left no doubt of his sincerity: Dantes rose, dispersed the fragments with the same precaution as before, and pushed back his bed against the wall. He then gave himself up to his happiness: he would no longer be alone. He was, perhaps, about to regain his liberty; at the worst, he would have a companion, and captivity that is shared is but half captivity.

All day Dantes walked up and down his cell. He sat down occasionally on his bed, pressing his hand on his heart. At the slightest noise he bounded towards the door. Once or twice the thought crossed his mind that he might be separated from this unknown, whom he loved already, and then his mind was made up—when the jailer moved his bed and stooped to examine the opening, he would kill him with his water-jug.

He would be condemned to die, but he was about to die of grief and despair when this miraculous voice recalled him to life.

The jailer came in the evening: Dantes was on his bed. It seemed to him that thus he better guarded the unfinished opening. Doubtless there was a strange expression in his eyes, for the jailer said, "Come, are you going mad again?"

Dantes did not answer: he feared that the emotion of his voice would betray him.

The jailer retired, shaking his head.

The night came; Dantes hoped that his neighbor would profit by the silence to address him, but he was mistaken. The next morning, however, just as he removed his bed from the wall, he heard three knocks; he threw himself on his knees.

"Is it you?" said he, "I am here."

"Is your jailer gone?"

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"Yes," said Dantes; "he will not return until the evening, so that we have twelve hours before us."

"I can work then," said the voice.

"Oh! yes, yes, this instant, I entreat you."

In an instant the portion of the floor on which Dantes (half buried in the opening) was leaning his two hands gave way; he cast himself back, whilst a mass of stones and earth disappeared in a hole that opened beneath the aperture he himself had formed. Then from the bottom of this passage, the depth of which it was impossible to measure, he saw it appear, first the head, then the shoulders, and lastly the body of a man, who sprang lightly into his cell.

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CHAPTER XVI.

A LEARNED ITALIAN.

RUSHING towards the friend so long and ardently desired, Dantes almost carried him towards the window, in order to obtain a better view of his features by the aid of the imperfect light that struggled through the grating of the prison.

He was a man of small stature, with hair blanched rather by suffering and sorrow than years. A deep set, penetrating eye, almost buried beneath the thick gray eyebrow, and a long (and still black) beard reaching down to his breast.

The meagreness of his features, deeply furrowed by care, joined to the bold outline of his strongly-marked features, announced a man more accustomed to exercise his moral faculties than his physical strength. Large drops of perspiration were now standing on his brow, while his garments hung about him in such rags as to render it useless to form a guess as to their primitive description.

The stranger might have numbered sixty or sixty-five years, but a certain briskness and appearance of vigor in his movements made it probable that he was aged more from captivity than the course of time. He received the enthusiastic greeting of his young acquaintance with evident pleasure, as though his chilled affec-

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tions seemed rekindled and invigorated by contact with one so warm and ardent. He thanked him with grateful cordiality for his kindly welcome, although he must at that moment have been suffering bitterly to find another dungeon where he had fondly reckoned on discovering a means of regaining his liberty.

"Let us first see," said he, "whether it is possible to remove the traces of my entrance here—our future comforts depend upon our jailers being entirely ignorant of it. Advancing to the opening, he stooped and raised the stone as easily as though it had not weighed an ounce; then fitting it into its place, he said:

"You removed this stone very carelessly; but I suppose you had no tools to aid you."

"Why!" exclaimed Dantes with astonishment, "do you possess any?"

"I made myself some; and with the exception of a file, I have all that are necessary—a chisel, pincers, and lever."

"Oh! how I should like to see these products of your industry and patience!"

"Well! in the first place, here is my chisel!"

So saying, he displayed a sharp, strong blade, with a handle made of beech wood.

"And with what did you contrive to make that?" inquired Dantes.

"With one of the clamps of my bedstead; and this very tool has sufficed me to hollow out the road by which I came hither, a distance of at least fifty feet."

"Fifty feet!" re-echoed Dantes, with a species of terror.

"Do not speak so loud, young man!—don't speak so loud! It frequently occurs in a state prison like this, that persons are stationed outside the doors of the cells

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purposely to overhear the conversation of the prisoners."

"But they believe I am shut up alone here!"

"That makes no difference."

"And you say that you penetrated a length of fifty feet to arrive here?"

"I do; that is about the distance that separates your chamber from mine—only unfortunately I did not curve aright: for want of the necessary geometrical instruments to calculate my scale of proportion, instead of taking an ellipsis of forty feet, I have made fifty. I expected, as I told you, to reach the outer wall, pierce through it, and throw myself into the sea; I have however, kept along the corridor on which your chamber opens, instead of going beneath it. My labor is all in vain, for I find that the corridor looks into a court-yard filled with soldiers."

"That's true," said Dantes; "but the corridor you speak of only bounds *one* side of my cell; there are three others—do you know anything of their situation?"

"This one is built against the solid rock, and it would take ten experienced miners, duly furnished with the requisite tools, as many years to perforate it; this adjoins the lower part of the governor's apartments, and were we to work our way through, we should only get into some lock-up cellars, where we must necessarily be recaptured; the fourth and last side of your cell looks out—looks out—stop a minute, now where does it open to?"

The side which thus excited curiosity was the one in which was fixed the loophole by which light was admitted into the chamber. This loophole, which gradually diminished as it approached the outside, until only an opening through which a child could not have passed,

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was, for better security, furnished with three iron bars, so as to quiet all apprehensions even in the mind of the most suspicious jailer as to the possibility of a prisoner's escape.

As the stranger finished his self-put question, he dragged the table beneath the window.

"Climb up," said he to Dantes. The young man obeyed, mounted on the table, and divining the intentions of his companion placed his back securely against the wall, and held out both hands. The stranger, whom as yet Dantes knew only by his assumed title of the number of his cell, sprang up with an agility by no means to be expected in a person of his years, and, light and steady as the bound of a cat or a lizard, climbed from the table to the outstretched hands of Dantes, and from them to the shoulders; then, almost doubling himself in two, for the ceiling of the dungeon prevented his holding himself erect, he managed to slip his head through the top bar of the window, so as to be able to command a perfect view from top to bottom.

An instant afterwards he hastily drew back his head, saying, "I thought so," and sliding from the shoulders of Dantes, as dexterously as he had ascended, he nimbly leapt from the table to the ground.

"What made you say those words?" asked the young man, in an anxious tone, in his turn descending from the table.

The elder prisoner appeared to meditate. "Yes," said he, at length, "it is so. This side of your chamber looks out upon a kind of open gallery, where patrols are continually passing, and sentries keep watch day and night."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Certain. I saw the soldier's shako and the top of

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his musket: that made me draw my head so quickly, for I was fearful he might also see me."

"Well?" inquired Dantes.

"You perceive, then, the utter impossibility of escaping through your dungeon?"

"Then?" pursued the young man eagerly.

"Then," answered the elder prisoner, "the will of God be done!" and as the old man slowly pronounced those words, an air of profound resignation spread itself over his care-worn countenance.

Dantes gazed on the individual who could thus philosophically resign hopes so long and ardently nourished with an astonishment mingled with admiration.

"Tell me, I entreat you, who and what you are?" said he, at length; "never have I met with so remarkable a person as yourself."

"Willingly," answered the stranger; "if indeed you feel any curiosity respecting one now, alas! powerless to aid you in any way!"

"Say not so; you can console and support me by the strength of your own powerful mind. Pray, let me know who you really are?"

The stranger smiled a melancholy smile. "Then, listen," said he; "I am the Abbe Faria, and have been imprisoned in this Chateau d'If since the year 1811; previously to which I had been confined for three years in the fortress of Fenestrelle. In the year 1811 I was transferred to Piedmont, in France; it was at this period I learned that the destiny, which seemed subservient to every wish formed by Napoleon, had bestowed on him a son, named King of Rome even in his cradle. I was very far then from expecting the change you have just informed me of, namely that four years afterwards this colossus of power would be overthrown.

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Then who reigns in France at this present moment? Napoleon II.?"

"No, Louis XVIII.!"

"The brother of Louis XVI.! How inscrutable are the ways of Providence! for what great and mysterious purpose has it pleased Heaven to abase the man once so elevated, and raise up the individual so beaten down and depressed?"

Dantes' whole attention was riveted on a man who could thus forget his own misfortunes while occupying himself with the destinies of others.

"But so it was," continued he, "in England. After Charles I. came Cromwell; to Cromwell succeeded Charles II., and then James II., who was succeeded by some son-in-law or relation. Ah! my friend!" said the abbe, turning towards Dantes, and surveying him with the kindling gaze of a prophet; "these are the changes and vicissitudes that gave liberty to a nation. Mark what I say! you are young, and may see my words come to pass, that such will be the case with France—you will see it, I say."

"Probably, if I ever get out of prison!"

"True," replied Faria, "we are prisoners; but I forget this sometimes, and there are even moments when my mental vision transports me beyond these walls, and I fancy myself at liberty."

"But wherefore are you here?"

"Because in 1807 I meditated the very scheme Napoleon wished to realize in 1811; because, like Machiavel, I desired to alter the political face of Italy, and instead of allowing it to be split up into a quantity of petty principalities, each held by some weak or tyrannical ruler, I sought to form one large, compact, and powerful empire; and, lastly, because I fancied I had found my

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Cæsar Borgia in a crowned simpleton, who feigned to enter into my views only to betray me. It was projected equally by Alexander VI., and Clement VII., but it will never succeed now, for they attempted it fruitlessly, and Napoleon was unable to complete his work. Italy seems fated to be unlucky." The old man uttered these last words in a tone of deep dejection, and his head fell listlessly on his breast.

To Dantes all this was perfectly incomprehensible. In the first place, he could not understand a man risking his life and liberty for such unimportant matters as the division of a kingdom; then again, the persons referred to were wholly unknown to him. Napoleon certainly he knew something of, inasmuch as he had seen and spoken with him; but the other individuals alluded to were strangers to him.

"Pray excuse my question," said Dantes, beginning to partake of the jailer's opinion touching the state of the abbe's brain; "but are you not the priest who is considered throughout the Chateau d'If—to—be—ill?"

"Mad, you mean, don't you?"

"I did not like to say so," answered Dantes, smiling.

"Well, then," resumed Faria, with a bitter smile, "let me answer your question in full, by acknowledging that I am the poor mad prisoner in the Chateau d'If; for many years permitted to amuse the different visitants to the prison with what is said to be my insanity; and, in all probability, I should be promoted to the honor of making sport for the children, if such innocent beings could be found in an abode devoted like this to suffering and despair."

Dantes remained for a short time mute and motionless; at length he said: "Then you abandon all hope of flight?"

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"I perceive its utter impossibility; and I consider it impious to attempt that which the Almighty evidently does not approve."

"Nay, be not discouraged. Would it not be expecting too much to hope to succeed at your first attempt? Why not try to find an opening in another direction to that which had so unfortunately failed?"

"Alas! it shows how little notion you can have of all it cost me to effect a purpose so unexpectedly frustrated that you talk of beginning over again. In the first place, I was four years making the tools I possess; and have been two years scraping and digging out earth, hard as granite itself; then what toil and fatigue has it not been to remove huge stones I should once have deemed impossible to loosen! Whole days have I passed in these Titanic efforts, considering my labor well repaid if by night-time I had contrived to carry away a square inch of this hard-bound cement, changed by ages into a substance unyielding as the stones themselves; then, to conceal the mass of earth and rubbish I had dug up, I was compelled to break through a staircase and throw the fruits of my labor into the hollow part of it; but the well is now so completely choked up, that I can scarcely think it would be possible to add another handful of dust without leading to a discovery. Consider, also, that I fully believed I had accomplished the end and aim of my undertaking, for which I had so exactly husbanded my strength as to make it just hold out to the termination of my enterprise; and just at the moment when I reckoned upon success, my hopes are forever dashed from me. No, I repeat again, that nothing shall induce me to renew attempts evidently at variance with the Almighty's pleasure."

Dantes held down his head, that his companion might

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not perceive how little of real regret at the failure of the scheme was expressed on his countenance; but, in truth, the young man could entertain no other feeling than delight at finding his prison would be no longer solitary or uncheered by human participation.

The abbe sunk upon Edmond's bed, while Edmond himself remained standing, lost in a train of deep meditation. Flight had never once occurred to him. There are, indeed, some things which appear so morally impossible that the mind does not dwell on them for an instant. To undermine the ground for fifty feet—to devote three years to a labor which, if successful, would conduct you to a precipice overhanging the sea—to plunge into the waves at a height of fifty or sixty feet, at the risk of being dashed to pieces against the rocks, should you have been fortunate enough to have escaped the balls from the sentinel's musket; and even, supposing all these perils past, then to have to swim for your life a distance of at least three miles ere you reach the shore—were difficulties so startling and formidable, that Dantes had never even dreamed of such a scheme, but resigned himself to his fate. But the sight of an old man clinging to life with so desperate a courage gave a fresh turn to his ideas, and inspired him with new courage and energy. An instance was before him of one less adroit, as well as weaker and older, having devised a plan which nothing but an unfortunate mistake in geometrical calculation should have rendered abortive. This same individual, with almost incredible patience and perseverance, had contrived to provide himself with tools requisite for so unparalleled an attempt. If, then, one man had already conquered the seeming impossibility, why should not he, Dantes, also try to regain his liberty? Faria had made his way through fifty feet of the

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prison, Dantes resolved to penetrate through double that distance. Faria, at the age of fifty, had devoted three years to the task; he, who was but half as old, would sacrifice six. Faria, a churchman and philosopher, had not shrunk from risking his life by trying to swim a distance of three miles to reach the Isles of Daume, Rattonneau, or Lemaire; should a hardy sailor, an experienced diver, like himself, shrink from a similar task? Should he, who had so often, for mere amusement's sake plunged to the bottom of the sea to fetch up the bright coral-branch, hesitate to swim a distance of three miles? He could do it in an hour, and how many times had he for pure pastime continued in the water for more than twice as long! At once Dantes resolved to follow the brave example of his energetic companion, and to remember that what has once been done may be done again.

After continuing some time in profound meditation, the young man suddenly exclaimed, "I have found what you were in search of."

Faria started: "Have you indeed?" cried he, raising his head with quick anxiety; "pray let me know what it is you have discovered?"

"The corridor through which you have bored your way from the cell you occupy here extends in the same direction as the outer gallery, does it not?"

"It does."

"And is not above fifteen steps from it?"

"About that."

"Well, then, I will tell you what we do. We must pierce through the corridor by forming a side opening about the middle, as it were the top part of a cross. This time you will lay your plans more accurately; we shall get out into the gallery you have described; kill

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the sentinel who guards it, and make our escape. All we require to insure success is courage, and that you possess, and strength, which I am not deficient in; as for patience, you have abundantly proved yours—you shall now see me prove mine."

"One instant, my dear friend," replied the abbe; "it is clear you do not understand the nature of the courage with which I am endowed, and what use I intend making of my strength. As for patience, I consider I have abundantly exercised that on recommencing every morning the task of the over-night, and every night beginning again the task of the day. But then, young man (and I pray of you to give me your full attention), then I thought I could not be doing anything displeasing to the Almighty in trying to set an innocent being at liberty—one who had committed no offence, and merited not condemnation."

"And have your notions changed?" asked Dantes, with much surprise; "do you think yourself more guilty in making the attempt since you have encountered me?"

"No; neither do I wish to incur guilt. Hitherto I have fancied myself merely waging war against circumstances, not men. I have thought it no sin to bore through a wall, or destroy a staircase, but I cannot so easily persuade myself to pierce a heart or take away a life."

A slight movement of surprise escaped Dantes. "Is it possible," said he, "that where your liberty is at stake you can allow any such scruple to deter you from obtaining it?"

"Tell me," replied Faria, "what has hindered you from knocking down your jailer with a piece of wood torn from your bedstead, dressing yourself in his clothes, and endeavoring to escape?"

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"Simply that I never thought of such a scheme," answered Dantes.

"Because," said the old man, "the natural repugnance to the commission of such a crime prevented its bare idea from occurring to you; and so it ever is with all simple and allowable things. Our natural instincts keep us from deviating from the strict line of duty. The tiger, whose nature teaches him to delight in shedding blood, needs but the organ of smelling to know when his prey is within his reach; and by following this instinct he is enabled to measure the leap necessary to enable him to spring on his victim; but man, on the contrary, loathes the idea of blood—it is not alone that the laws of social life inspire him with a shrinking dread of taking life; his natural construction and physical formation——"

Dantes remained confused and silenced by this explanation of the thoughts which had unconsciously been working in his mind, or rather soul; for there are two distinct sorts of ideas, those that proceed from the head and those that emanate from the heart.

"Since my imprisonment," said Faria, "I have thought over all the most celebrated cases of escape recorded. Among the many that have failed in obtaining the ultimate release of the prisoner, I consider there has been a precipitation—a haste, wholly incompatible with such undertakings. Those escapes that have been crowned with full success have been long meditated upon and carefully arranged—such, for instance, as the escape of the Duke de Beaufort from the Chateau de Vincennes, that of the Abbe Dubuquoi from Fort l'Eveque; Latude's from the Bastile, with similar cases of successful evasion; and I have come to the conclusion that chance frequently affords opportunities we should never

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have ourselves thought of. Let us, therefore, wait patiently for some favorable moment; rely upon it, you will not find me more backward than yourself in seizing it."

"Ah," said Dantes, "you might well endure the tedious delay; you were constantly occupied in the task you set yourself, and when weary with toil, you had your hopes to refresh and encourage you."

"I assure you," replied the old man, "I did not turn to that source for recreation or support."

"What did you do, then?"

"I wrote or studied."

"Were you then permitted the use of pens, ink, and paper?"

"Oh, no!" answered the abbe; "I had none but what I made for myself."

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed Dantes, "that you could invent all those things—for real ones you could not procure unaided?"

"I do, indeed, truly say so."

Dantes gazed with kindling eyes and rapidly increasing admiration on the wonderful being whose hand seemed gifted with the power of a magician's wand; some doubt, however, still lingered in his mind, which was quickly perceived by the penetrating eye of the abbe.

"When you pay me a visit in my cell, my young friend, said he, "I will show you an entire work, the fruits of the thoughts and reflections of my whole life; many of them meditated over in the ruins of the Coliseum of Rome, at the foot of St. Mark's Column at Venice, and on the borders of the Arno at Florence, little imagining at the time that they would be arranged in order within the walls of the Chateau d'If. The work I speak of is

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called '*A Treatise on the Practicability of Forming Italy into One General Monarchy*,' and will make one large quarto volume."

"And on what have you written all this?"

"On two of my shirts. I invented a preparation that makes linen as smooth and as easy to write on as parchment."

"You are, then, a chemist?"

"Somewhat—I know Lavoisier, and was the intimate friend of Cabanis."

"But for such a work you must have needed books—had you any?"

"I possessed nearly 5000 volumes in my library at Rome, but after reading them over many times, I found out that with 150 well-chosen books a man possesses a complete analysis of all human knowledge, or at least all that is either useful or desirable to be acquainted with. I devoted three years of my life to reading and studying these 150 volumes, till I knew them nearly by heart. So that since I have been in prison, a very slight effort of memory has enabled me to recall the contents as readily as though the pages were open before me. I could recite you the whole of Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, Titus Livius, Tacitus, Strada, Jornandes, Dante, Montaigne, Shakspeare, Spinosa, Machiavel, and Bossuet. Observe, I merely quote the most important names and writers."

"You are, doubtless, acquainted with a variety of languages, so as to have been able to read all these?"

"Yes, I speak five of the modern tongues; that is to say, German, French, Italian, English, and Spanish; by the aid of ancient Greek I learned modern Greek—I don't speak it so well as I could wish, but I am still trying to improve myself."

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"Improve yourself!" repeated Dantes; "why how can you manage to do so?"

"Why, I made a vocabulary of the words I knew; turned, returned, and arranged them, so as to enable me to express my thoughts through their medium. I know nearly one thousand words, which is all that is absolutely necessary; although I believe there are nearly one hundred thousand in the dictionaries. I cannot hope to be very fluent, but I certainly should have no difficulty in explaining my wants and wishes; and that would be quite as much as I should ever require."

Stronger grew the wonder of Dantes, who almost fancied he had to do with one gifted with supernatural powers; still hoping to find some imperfection which might bring him down to the level of human beings, he added, "Then if you were not furnished with pens, how did you manage to write the work you speak of?"

"I made myself some excellent ones, which would be universally preferred to all others, if once known.

"You are aware that huge whitings are served to us on *maigre* days. Well, I selected the cartilages of the heads of these fishes and you can scarcely imagine the delight with which I welcomed the arrival of each Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, as affording me the means of increasing my stock of pens; for I will freely confess that my historical labors have been my greatest solace and relief. While retracing the past I forgot the present; and while following the free and independent course of historical record, I cease to remember that I am myself immured within the gloomy walls of a dungeon."

"But the ink requisite for copying down your ideas," said Dantes; "how have you procured that?"

"I will tell you," replied Faria; "there was formerly

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a fireplace in my dungeon, but closed up long ere I became an occupant of this prison. Still it must have been many years in use, for it was thickly covered with a coating of soot; this soot I dissolved in a portion of the wine brought to me every Sunday; and I assure you a better ink cannot be desired; for very important notes, for which closer attention is required, I have pricked one of my fingers, and written the facts claiming notice in blood."

"And when," asked Dantes, "will you show me all this?"

"Whenever you please," replied the abbe.

"Oh, then! let it be directly," exclaimed the young man.

"Follow me, then," said the abbe, as he re-entered the subterraneous passage, in which he soon disappeared, followed by Dantes.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE ABBE'S CHAMBER.

AFTER having passed with tolerable ease through the subterranean passage, which, however, did not permit of their holding themselves erect, the two friends reached the further end of the corridor, into which the cell of the abbe opened; from that point the opening became much narrower, barely permitting an individual to creep through on his hands and knees. The floor of the abbe's cell was paved, and it had been by raising one of the stones in the most obscure corner that Faria had been able to commence the laborious task of which Dantes had witnessed the completion.

As he entered the chamber of his friend, Dantes cast around one eager and searching glance in quest of the expected marvels; but nothing more than common met his view.

"It is well," said the abbe, "we have some hours before us; it is now just a quarter past twelve o'clock."

Instinctively Dantes turned round to observe by what watch or clock the abbe had been able so accurately to specify the hour.

"Look at this ray of light, which enters by my window," said the abbe, "and then observe the lines traced on the wall. Well; by means of these lines, which are in accordance with the double motion of the earth, as

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well as the ellipses it describes round the sun, I am enabled to ascertain the precise hour with more minuteness than if I possessed a watch, for that might be broken or deranged in its movements, while the sun and earth never vary in their appointed paths."

This last explanation was wholly lost upon Dantes, who had always imagined, from seeing the sun rise from behind the mountains and set in the Mediterranean, that it moved, and not the earth. A double movement in the globe he inhabited, and of which he could feel nothing, appeared to him perfectly impossible; still, though unable to comprehend the full meaning of his companion's allusions, each word that fell from his lips seemed fraught with the wonders of science, as admirably deserving of being brought fully to light as were the glittering treasures he could just recollect having visited during his earliest youth in a voyage he made to Guzerat and Golconda.

"Come!" said he to the abbe, "show me the wonderful inventions you told me of—I am all impatience to behold them."

The abbe smiled, and proceeding to the disused fireplace, raised, by the help of his chisel, a long stone which had doubtless been the hearth, beneath which was a cavity of considerable depth, serving as a safe depository of the articles mentioned to Dantes.

"What do you wish to see first?" asked the abbe.

"Oh! your great work on the monarchy of Italy!"

Faria then drew forth from its hiding-place three or four rolls of linen, laid one over the other, like the folds of papyrus found in mummy-cases; these rolls consisted of slips of cloth about four inches wide and eighteen long; they were all carefully numbered and closely covered with writing, so legible that Dantes could easily

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read it, as well as make out the sense—it being in Italian, a language he, as a Provençal, perfectly understood.

"There!" said he, "there is the work complete—I wrote the word *finis* at the end of the last page about a week ago. I have torn up two of my shirts, and as many handkerchiefs as I was master of, to complete the precious pages. Should I ever get out of prison and find a printer courageous enough to publish what I have composed, my literary reputation is forever secured."

"I see," answered Dantes. "Now let me behold the curious pens with which you have written your work."

"Look!" said Faria, showing to the young man a slender stick about six inches long and much resembling the size of the handle of a fine painting-brush, to the end of which was tied by a piece of thread one of those cartilages of which the abbe had before spoken to Dantes —it was pointed, and divided at the nib like an ordinary pen.

Dantes examined it with intense admiration, then looked around to see the instrument with which it had been shaped so correctly into form.

"Ah, I see!" said Faria, "you are wondering where I found my penknife, are not you? Well, I must confess that I look upon that article of my ingenuity as the very perfection of all my handiworks. I made it, as well as this knife, out of an old iron candlestick." The penknife was sharp and keen as a razor; as for the other knife, it possessed the double advantage of being capable of serving either as a dagger or a knife.

Dantes examined the various articles shown him with the same attention he had bestowed on the curiosities and strange tools exhibited in the shops at Marseilles as the work of the savages in the South Seas, from whence they had been brought by the different trading vessels.

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"As for the ink," said Faria, "I told you how I managed to obtain that—and I only just make it from time to time, as I require it."

"There is one thing that puzzles me still," observed Dantes, "and that is how you managed to do all this by daylight?"

"I worked at night also," replied Faria.

"Night!—why, for Heaven's sake, are your eyes like a cat's that you can see to work in the dark?"

"Indeed they are not: but a beneficent Creator has supplied man with intelligence and ability to supply the want of the power you allude to. I furnished myself with a light quite as good as that possessed by the cat."

"You did? Pray tell me how."

"I separated the fat from the meat served to me, melted it and made a most capital oil; here is my lamp." So saying, the abbe exhibited a sort of vessel very similar to those employed upon the occasion of public illuminations.

"But how do you procure a light?"

"Oh, here are two flints, and a morsel of burnt linen."

"And your matches?"

"Were easily prepared—I feigned a disorder of the skin, and asked for a little sulphur, which was readily supplied."

Dantes laid the different things he had been looking at gently on the table, and stood with his head drooping on his breast, as though overwhelmed by the persevering spirit and strength of character developed in each fresh trait of his new-found friend's conduct.

"You have not seen all yet," continued Faria, "for I did not think it wise to trust all my treasures in the same hiding-place; let us shut this one up, and then you shall see what else I have to display."

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Dantes helped him to replace the stone as they found it; the abbe sprinkled a little dust over it to conceal the traces of its having been removed, rubbed his foot well on it to make it assume the same appearance as the other, and then, going towards his bed, he removed it from the spot it stood in. Behind the head of the bed, and concealed by a stone fitting in so closely as to defy all suspicion, was a hollow space, and in this space a ladder of cords between twenty-five and thirty feet in length.

Dantes closely and eagerly examined it—he found it firm, solid, and compact enough to bear any weight.

"Who supplied you with the materials for making this wonderful work?"

"No one but myself. I tore up several of my shirts, and unravelled the sheets of my bed, during my three years' imprisonment at Fenestrelle; and when I was removed to the Chateau d'If, I managed to bring the ravellings with me, so that I have been able to finish my work here."

"And was it not discovered that your sheets were unhemmed?"

"Oh, no! for when I had taken out the thread required, I hemmed the edges over again."

"With what?"

"With this needle," said the abbe, as, opening his ragged vestments, he showed Dantes a long, sharp fish-bone, with a small, perforated eye for the thread, a small portion of which still remained in it. "I once thought," continued Faria, "of removing these iron bars, and letting myself down from the window, which, as you see, is somewhat wider than yours—although I should have enlarged it still more preparatory to my flight. However, I discovered that I should merely have

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dropped into a sort of inner court, and I therefore renounced the project altogether, as too full of risk and danger. Nevertheless, I carefully preserved my ladder against one of those unforeseen opportunities of which I spoke just now, and which sudden chance frequently brings about."

While affecting to be deeply engaged in examining the ladder, the mind of Dantes was, in fact, busily occupied by the idea that a person so intelligent, ingenious, and clear-sighted as the abbe, might probably be enabled to dive into the dark recesses of his own misfortunes, and cause that light to shine upon the mystery connected with them he had in vain sought to elicit.

"What are you thinking of?" asked the abbe, smilingly, imputing the deep abstraction in which his visitor was plunged to the excess of his awe and wonder.

"I was reflecting, in the first place," replied Dantes, "upon the enormous degree of intelligence and ability you must have employed to reach the high perfection to which you have attained. If you thus surpass all mankind while but a prisoner, what would you not have accomplished free?"

"Possibly nothing at all: the overflow of my brain would probably, in a state of freedom, have evaporated in a thousand follies; it needs trouble and difficulty and danger to hollow out various mysterious and hidden mines of human intelligence. Pressure is required, you know, to ignite powder; captivity has collected into one single focus all the floating faculties of my mind; they have come into close contact in the narrow space in which they have been wedged, and you are well aware that from the collision of clouds electricity is produced; from electricity comes the lightning, from whose flash we have light amid our greatest darkness."

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"Alas, no!" replied Dantes; "I know not that these things follow in such natural order. Oh, I am very ignorant; and you must be blessed, indeed, to possess the knowledge you have."

The abbe smiled. "Well," said he, "but you had another subject for your thoughts besides admiration for me; did you not say so just now?"

"I did!"

"You have told me as yet but one of them—let me hear the other."

"It was this: that while you had related to me all the particulars of your past life, you were perfectly unacquainted with mine."

"Your life, my young friend, has not been of sufficient length to admit of your having passed through any very important events."

"It has been long enough to inflict on me a misfortune so great, so crushingly overwhelming that, unconscious as I am of having in any way deserved it, I would fain know who, of all mankind, has been the accursed author of it, that I may no longer accuse Heaven, as I have done in my fury and despair, of wilful injustice towards an innocent and injured man."

"Then you profess ignorance of the crime with which you are charged?"

"I do indeed; and this I swear by the two beings most dear to me upon earth—my father and Mercedes."

"Come," said the abbe, closing his hiding-place, and pushing the bed back to its original situation, "let me hear your story."

Dantes obeyed, and commenced what he called his history, but which consisted only of the account of a voyage to India and two or three in the Levant, until he arrived at the recital of his last cruise, with the

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death of Captain Leclere, and the receipt of a packet to be delivered by himself to the grand marechal; his interview with that personage, and his receiving in place of the packet brought a letter addressed to M. Noirtier—his arrival at Marseilles and interview with his father—his affection for Mercedes and their nuptial *fête*—his arrest and subsequent examination in the temporary prison of the Palais de Justice, ending in his final imprisonment in the Chateau d'If. From the period of his arrival all was a blank to Dantes—he knew nothing, not even the length of time he had been imprisoned. His recital finished, the abbe reflected long and earnestly.

"There is," said he, at the end of his meditations, "a clever maxim which bears upon what I was saying to you some little while ago, and that is, that unless wicked ideas take root in a naturally depraved mind, human nature, in a right and wholesome state, revolts at crime. Still, from an artificial civilization have originated wants, vices, and false tastes, which occasionally become so powerful as to stifle within us all good feelings, and ultimately to lead us into guilt and wickedness—from this view of things then comes the axiom I alluded to: that if you wish to discover the author of any bad action, seek first to discover the person to whom the perpetration of that bad action could be in any way advantageous. Now to apply it in your case—to whom could your disappearance have been serviceable?"

"To no breathing soul. Why, who could have cared about the removal of so insignificant a person as myself?"

"Do not speak thus, for your reply evinces neither logic nor philosophy; everything is relative, my dear

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young friend, from the king who obstructs his successor's immediate possession of the throne, to the occupant of a place for which the supernumerary to whom it has been promised ardently longs. Now, in the event of the king's death, his successor inherits a crown—when the placeman dies, the supernumerary steps into his shoes, and receives the salary of twelve thousand livres. Well, these twelve thousand livres are his civil list, and are as essential to him as the twelve millions of a king. Every individual, from the highest to the lowest degree, has his place in the ladder of social life, and around him is grouped a little world of interests composed of stormy passions and conflicting atoms: but let us return to your world. You say you were on the point of being appointed captain of the 'Pharaoh?'"

"I was."

"And about to become the husband of a young and lovely girl?"

"True."

"Now could any one have had an interest in preventing the accomplishment of these two circumstances? But let us first settle the question as to its being the interest of any one to hinder you from being captain of the 'Pharaoh.' What say you?"

"I cannot believe such was the case. I was generally liked on board; and had the sailors possessed the right of selecting a captain themselves, I feel convinced their choice would have fallen on me. There was only one person among the crew who had any feeling of ill-will towards me. I had quarrelled with him some time previously, and had even challenged him to fight me; but he refused."

"Now we are getting on. And what was this man's name?"

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"Danglars."

"What rank did he hold on board?"

"He was supercargo."

"And had you been captain, should you have retained him in his employment?"

"Not if the choice had remained with me; for I had frequently observed inaccuracies in his accounts."

"Good again! Now then, tell me was any person present during your last conversation with Captain Leclere?"

"No: we were quite alone."

"Could your conversation be overheard by any one?"

"It might, for the cabin-door was open—and—stay; now I recollect—Danglars himself passed by just as Captain Leclere was giving me the packet for the grand marechal."

"That will do," cried the abbe; "now we are on the right scent. Did you take anybody with you when you put into the port of Elba?"

"Nobody."

"Somebody there received your packet, and gave you a letter in place of it, I think."

"Yes, the grand marechal did."

"And what did you do with that letter?"

"Put it into my pocket-book."

"Ah! indeed! You had your pocket-book with you, then? Now, how could a pocket-book, large enough to contain an official letter, find sufficient room in the pockets of a sailor?"

"You are right: I had it not with me— it was left on board."

"Then it was not till your return to the ship that you placed the letter in the pocket-book?"

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"No."

"And what did you do with this same letter while returning from Porto Ferrajo to your vessel?"

"I carried it in my hand."

"So that when you went on board the 'Pharaoh,' everybody could perceive you held a letter in your hand?"

"To be sure they could."

"Danglars, as well as the rest?"

"Yes: he as well as others."

"Now, listen to me, and try to recall every circumstance attending your arrest. Do you recollect the words in which the information against you was couched?"

"Oh, yes! I read it over three times, and the words have sunk into my memory."

"Repeat it to me."

Dantes paused for a few instants, as though collecting his ideas, then said: "This is it word for word: 'M. le Procureur du Roi is informed, by a friend to the throne and religion, that an individual named Edmond Dantes, second in command on board the "Pharaoh," this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been charged by Murat with a packet for the usurper; again, by the usurper, with a letter to the Bonapartist club in Paris. This proof of his guilt may be procured by his immediate arrest, as the letter will be found either about his person, at his father's residence, or in his cabin on board the "Pharaoh."'"

The abbe shrugged up his shoulders. "The thing is clear as day," said he, "and you must have had a very unsuspecting nature, as well as a good heart, not to have suspected the origin of the whole affair."

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"Do you really think so? Ah, that would, indeed, be the treachery of a villain!"

"How did Danglars usually write?"

"Oh! extremely well."

"And how was the anonymous letter written?"

"All the wrong way—backwards, you know."

Again the abbe smiled. "In fact it was a disguised hand?"

"I don't know; it was very boldly written, if disguised."

"Stop a bit," said the abbe, taking up what he called his pen, and, after dipping it into the ink, he wrote on a morsel of prepared linen with his left hand the first two or three words of the accusation. Dantes drew back, and gazed on the abbe with a sensation almost amounting to terror.

"How very astonishing!" cried he at length. "Why your writing exactly resembles that of the accusation!"

"Simply because that accusation has been written with the left hand; and I have always remarked one thing—"

"What is that?"

"That whereas all writing done with the right hand varies, that performed with the left hand is invariably similar."

"You have evidently seen and observed everything."

"Let us proceed."

"Oh! yes, yes! Let us go on."

"Now as regards the second question. Was there any person whose interest it was to prevent your marriage with Mercedes?"

"Yes, a young man who loved her."

"And his name was—"

"Fernand."

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"That is a Spanish name, I think?"

"He is a Catalan."

"You imagine him capable of writing the letter?"

"Oh, no! he would more likely have got rid of me by sticking a knife into me."

"That is in strict accordance with the Spanish character; an assassination they will unhesitatingly commit, but an act of cowardice never!"

"Besides," said Dantes, "the various circumstances mentioned in the letter were wholly unknown to him."

"You had never spoken of them yourself to any one?"

"To no person whatever."

"Not even to your mistress?"

"No, not even to my betrothed bride."

"Then it is Danglars beyond a doubt."

"I feel quite sure of it now."

"Wait a little. Pray, was Danglars acquainted with Fernand?"

"No—yes, he was. Now I recollect——"

"What?"

"To have seen them both sitting at table together beneath an arbor at Pere Pamphile's the evening before the day fixed for my wedding. They were in earnest conversation. Danglars was joking in a friendly way, but Fernand looked pale and agitated."

"Were they alone?"

"There was a third person with them whom I knew perfectly well, and who had, in all probability, made their acquaintance; he was a tailor named Caderousse, but he was quite intoxicated. Stay! stay! How strange that it should not have occurred to me before! Now I remember quite well that on the table round which they were sitting were pens, ink and paper. Oh! the

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heartless, treacherous scoundrels!" exclaimed Dantes, pressing his hands to his throbbing brows.

"Is there anything else I can assist you in discovering besides the villainy of your friends?" inquired the abbe.

"Yes, yes," replied Dantes eagerly; "I would beg of you, who see so completely to the depths of things, and to whom the greatest mystery seems but an easy riddle to explain to me how it was that I underwent no second examination, was never brought to trial, and above all, my being condemned without ever having had sentence passed on me?"

"That is altogether a different and more serious matter," responded the abbe. "The ways of justice are frequently too dark and mysterious to be easily penetrated. All we have hitherto done in the matter has been child's play. If you wish me to enter upon the more difficult part of the business, you must assist me by the most minute information on every point."

"That I will, gladly. So pray begin, my dear abbe, and ask me whatever question you please; for, in good truth, you seem to turn over the pages of my past life far better than I could do myself."

"In the first place, then, who examined you — the procureur du roi, his deputy, or a magistrate?"

"The deputy."

"Was he young or old?"

"About six or seven-and-twenty years of age, I should say."

"To be sure," answered the abbe. "Old enough to be ambitious, but not sufficiently so to have hardened his heart. And how did he treat you?"

"With more of mildness than severity."

"Did you tell him your whole story?"

"I did."

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"And did his conduct change at all in the course of your examination?"

"Yes: certainly he did appear much disturbed when he read the letter that had brought me into this scrape. He seemed quite overcome at the thought of the danger I was in."

"*You* were in?"

"Yes; for whom else could he have felt any apprehension?"

"Then you feel quite convinced he sincerely pitied your misfortune?"

"Why, he gave me one great proof of his sympathy, at least."

"And what was that?"

"He burnt the sole proof that could at all have criminated me."

"Do you mean the letter of accusation?"

"Oh, no! the letter I was instructed to convey to Paris."

"Are you sure he burnt it?"

"He did so before my eyes."

"Ay, indeed! that alters the case, and leads to the conclusion that this man might, after all, be a greater scoundrel than I at first believed."

"Upon my word," said Dantes, "you make me shudder. If I listen much longer to you, I shall believe the world is filled with tigers and crocodiles."

"Only remember that two-legged tigers and crocodiles are more dangerous than those that walk on four."

"Never mind, let us go on."

"With all my heart! You tell me he burnt the letter in your presence?"

"He did; saying at the same time, 'You see I thus destroy the only proof existing against you.'"

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"This action is somewhat too sublime to be natural."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it. To whom was this letter addressed?"

"To M. Noirtier, No. 13 Rue Coq-Heron, Paris."

"Now can you conceive any interest your heroic deputy procureur could by possibility have had in the destruction of that letter?"

"Why, it is not altogether impossible he might have had, for he made me promise several times never to speak of that letter to any one, assuring me he so advised me for my own interest; and, more than this, he insisted on my taking a solemn oath never to utter the name mentioned in the address."

"Noirtier!" repeated the abbe; "Noirtier!—I knew a person of that name at the court of the Queen of Etruria—a Noirtier who had been a Girondin during the revolution! What was your deputy called?"

"De Villefort!"

The abbe burst into a fit of laughter; while Dantes gazed on him in utter astonishment.

"What ails you?" said he at length.

"Do you see this ray of light?"

"I do."

"Well! I see my way into the full meaning of all the proceedings against you more clearly than you even discern that sunbeam. Poor fellow! poor young man! And you tell me this magistrate expressed great sympathy and commiseration for you?"

"He did!"

"And the worthy man destroyed your compromising letter?"

"He burnt it before me!"

"And then made you swear never to utter the name of Noirtier?"

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"Certainly!"

"Why, you poor short-sighted simpleton, can you not guess who this Noirtier was, whose very name he was so careful to keep concealed?"

"Indeed I cannot!"

"No other than the father of your sympathetic deputy procureur."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Dantes, or hell opened its yawning gulf before him, he could not have been more completely transfixed with horror than at the sound of words so wholly unexpected, revealing as they did the fiendish perfidy which had consigned him to wear out his days in the dark cell of a prison, that was to him as a living grave. Starting up, he clasped his hands around his head as though to prevent his very brain from bursting, as in a choked and almost inarticulate voice, he exclaimed, "His father! oh, no! not his father surely."

"His own father, I assure you," replied the abbe; "his right name was Noirtier de Villefort."

At this instant a bright light shot through the mind of Dantes, and cleared up all that had been dark and obscure before. The change that had come over Villefort during the examination; the destruction of the letter, the exacted promise, the almost supplicating tones of the magistrate, who seemed rather to implore mercy than denounce punishment—all returned with a stunning force to his memory. A cry of mental agony escaped his lips, and he staggered against the wall almost like a drunken man; then, as the paroxysm passed away, he hurried to the opening conducting from the abbe's cell to his own, and said:

"I must be alone to think over all this."

When he regained his dungeon he threw himself on

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his bed, where the turnkey found him at his evening visit sitting, with fixed gaze and contracted features, still and motionless as a statue; but, during hours of deep meditation, which to him had seemed but as minutes, he had formed a fearful resolution, and bound himself to its fulfilment by a solemn oath.

Dantes was at length roused from his reverie by the voice of Faria, who having also been visited by his jailer, had come to invite his fellow-sufferer to share his supper.

The reputation of being out of his mind, though harmlessly and even amusingly so, had procured for the abbe greater privileges than were allowed to prisoners in general. He was supplied with bread of a finer, whiter description, than the usual prison fare, and even regaled each Sunday with a small quantity of wine; the present day chanced to be Sunday, and the abbe came delighted at having such luxuries to offer his new friend.

Dantes followed him with a firm and assured step; his features had lost their almost spasmodic contraction, and now wore their usual expression; but there was that in his whole appearance that bespoke one who had come to a fixed and desperate resolve.

Faria bent on him his penetrating eye. "I regret now," said he, "having helped you in your late inquiries, or having given you the information I did."

"Why so?" inquired Dantes?

"Because it has instilled a new passion in your heart—that of vengeance."

A bitter smile played over the features of the young man, "Let us talk of something else," said he.

Again the abbe looked at him, then mournfully shook his head, but, in accordance with Dantes' request, he began to speak of other matters.

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The elder prisoner was one of those persons whose conversation, like that of all who have experienced many trials, contained many useful and important hints as well as sound information; but it was never egotistical, for the unfortunate man never alluded to his own sorrows.

Dantes listened with admiring attention to all he said; some of his remarks corresponded with what he already knew, or applied to the sort of knowledge his nautical life had enabled him to acquire. A part of the good abbe's words, however, were wholly incomprehensible to him; but, like those auroræ boreales which serve to light the navigators in southern latitudes, they sufficed to open fresh views to the inquiring mind of the listener and to give him a glimpse of new horizons, illumined by the wild meteoric flash, enabled him justly to estimate the delight an intellectual mind would have in following the high and towering spirit of one so richly gifted as Faria in all the giddiest heights or lowest depths of science.

"You must teach me a small part of what you know," said Dantes, "if only to prevent your growing weary of me. I can well believe that so learned a person as yourself would prefer absolute solitude to being tormented with the company of one as ignorant and uninformed as myself. If you will only agree to my request, I promise you never to mention another word about escaping."

The abbe smiled. "Alas! my child," said he, "human knowledge is confined within very narrow limits; and when I have taught you mathematics, physics, history, and the three or four modern languages with which I am acquainted, you will know as much as I do myself. Now it will scarcely require two years for

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me to communicate to you the stock of learning I possess."

"Two years!" exclaimed Dantes; "do you really believe I can acquire all these things in so short a time?"

"Not their application certainly, but their principles you may; to learn is not to know, there are the learners and the learned. Memory makes the one, philosophy the other."

"But can I not learn philosophy as well as other things?"

"My son, philosophy, as I understand it, is reducible to no rules by which it can be learned; it is the amalgamation of all the sciences, the golden cloud which bears the soul to heaven."

"Well, then," said Dantes, "leaving philosophy out of the question, tell me what you shall teach me first? I feel my great need of scientific knowledge, and long to begin the work of improvement; say when shall we commence?"

"Directly, if you will," said the abbe.

And that very evening the prisoners sketched a plan of education to be entered upon the following day.

Dantes possessed a prodigious memory, combined with an astonishing quickness and readiness of conception; the mathematical turn of his mind rendered him apt at all kinds of calculation, while his naturally poetical feelings threw a light and pleasing veil over the dry reality of arithmetical computation or the rigid severity of lines. He already knew Italian, and had also picked up a little of the Romaic dialect during his different voyages to the East, and by the aid of these two languages he easily comprehended the construction of all the others, so that at the end of six months he began to speak Spanish, English, and German.

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In strict accordance with the promise made to the abbe Dantes never even alluded to flight; it might have been that the delight his studies afforded him supplied the place of liberty; or, probably, the recollection of his pledged word (a point, as we have already seen, to which he paid a rigid attention) kept him from reverting to any plan for escape; but absorbed in the acquisition of knowledge, days, even months, passed by unheeded in one rapid and instructive course; time flew on, and at the end of a year Dantes was a new man. With Faria, on the contrary, Dantes remarked that, spite of the relief his society afforded, he daily grew sadder; one thought seemed incessantly to harass and distract his mind. Sometimes he would fall into long reveries, sigh heavily and involuntarily, then suddenly rise, and, with folded arms, begin pacing the confined space of his dungeon.

One day he stopped all at once in the midst of these so often repeated promenades, and exclaimed: "Ah! if there were no sentinel!"

"There shall not be one a minute longer than you please," said Dantes, who had followed the working of his thoughts as accurately as though his brain were inclosed in crystal so clear as to display its minutest operations.

"I have already told you," answered the abbe, "that I loath the idea of shedding blood."

"Still in our case the death we should bestow would not be dictated by any wild or savage propensity, but as a necessary step to secure our own personal safety and preservation."

"No matter! I could never agree to it."

"Still you have thought of it?"

"Incessantly, alas!" cried the abbe.

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"And you have discovered a means of regaining our freedom; have you not?" asked Dantes, eagerly.

"I have; if it were only possible to place a deaf and blind sentinel in the gallery beyond us."

"I will undertake to render him both," replied the young man, with an air of determined resolution that made his companion shudder.

"No, no!" cried the abbe; "I tell you the thing is impossible: name it no more."

In vain did Dantes endeavor to renew the subject; the abbe shook his head in token of disapproval, but refused any further conversation respecting it.

Three months passed away.

"Do you feel yourself strong?" inquired the abbe of Dantes.

The young man in reply took up the chisel, bent it into the form of a horseshoe, and then as readily straightened it.

"And will you engage not to do any harm to the sentry, except as a last extremity?"

"I promise on my honor not to hurt a hair of his head, unless positively obliged for our mutual preservation."

"Then," said the abbe, "we may hope to put our design into execution."

"And how long shall we be in accomplishing the necessary work?"

"At least a year."

"And shall we begin at once?"

"Directly!"

"We have lost a year to no purpose," cried Dantes.

"Do you consider the last twelve months as wasted?" asked the abbe, in a tone of mild reproach.

"Forgive me!" cried Edmond, blushing deeply; "I am indeed ungrateful to have hinted such a thing."

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"Tut! tut!" answered the abbe; "man is but man at last, and you are about the best specimen of the genus I have ever known. Come let me show you my plan."

The abbe then showed Dantes the sketch he had made for their escape: it consisted of a plan of his own cell and that of Dantes, with the corridor which united them. In this passage he proposed to form a tunnel, such as is employed in mines; this tunnel would conduct the two prisoners immediately beneath the gallery where the sentry kept watch; once there, a large excavation would be made, and one of the flagstones with which the gallery was paved be so completely loosened, that at the desired moment it would give way beneath the soldier's feet, who, falling into the excavation below, would be immediately bound and gagged, ere, stunned by the effects of his fall, he had power to offer any resistance. The prisoners were then to make their way through one of the gallery windows, and to let themselves down from the outer walls by means of the abbe's ladder of cords. The eyes of Dantes sparkled with joy, and he rubbed his hands with delight at the idea of a plan so simple, yet apparently so certain to succeed.

That very day the miners commenced their labors; and that with so much more vigor and alacrity as it succeeded to a long rest from fatigue, and was destined in all probability to carry out the dearest wish of the heart of each.

Nothing interrupted the progress of their work except the necessity of returning to their respective cells against the hour in which their jailer was in the habit of visiting them; they had learned to distinguish the almost imperceptible sound of his footsteps, as he descended towards their dungeons, and happily never failed being prepared for his coming.

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The fresh earth excavated during their present work, and which would have entirely blocked up the old passage, was thrown, by degrees and the utmost precaution, out of the window in either Faria's or Dantes' cell; the rubbish being first pulverized so finely that the night wind carried it far away without permitting the smallest trace to remain.

More than a year had been consumed in this undertaking; the only tools for which had been a chisel, a knife, and a wooden lever; Faria still continuing to instruct Dantes by conversing with him, sometimes in one language, sometimes in another; at others relating to him the history of nations and great men who from time to time have left behind them one of those bright tracks called glory.

The abbe was a man of the world, and had moreover mixed in the first society of the day; his appearance was impressed with that air of melancholy dignity which Dantes, thanks to the imitative powers bestowed on him by nature, easily acquired, as well as that outward polish and politeness he had before been wanting in, and which is seldom possessed except by those who had been placed in constant intercourse with persons of high birth and breeding.

At the end of fifteen months the tunnel was made and the excavation completed beneath the gallery, and the two workmen could distinctly hear the measured tread of the sentinel as he paced to and fro over their heads.

Compelled, as they were, to await a night sufficiently dark to favor their flight, they were obliged to defer their final attempt till that auspicious moment should arrive; their greatest dread now was lest the stone through which the sentry was doomed to fall should give way before its right time, and this they had in some

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measure provided against by placing under it, as a kind of prop, a sort of bearer they had discovered among the foundations through which they had worked their way. Dantes was occupied in arranging this piece of wood when he heard Faria, who had remained in Edmond's cell for the purpose of cutting a peg to secure their rope ladder, call to him in accents of pain and suffering. Dantes hastened to his dungeon, where he found him standing in the middle of the room, pale as death, his forehead streaming with perspiration, and his hands clenched tightly together.

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed Dantes; "what is the matter? what has happened?"

"Quick! quick!" returned the abbe; "listen to what I have to say."

Dantes looked in fear and wonder at the livid countenance of Faria, whose eyes, already dull and sunken, were circled by a halo of a bluish cast, his lips were white as those of a corpse, and his very hair seemed to stand on end.

"For God's sake!" cried Dantes, "what is the meaning of this? Tell me, I beseech you, what ails you?"

"Alas!" faltered the abbe, "all is over with me. I am seized with a terrible, perhaps mortal illness; I can feel that the paroxysm is fast approaching; I had a similar attack the year previous to my imprisonment. This malady admits of but one remedy; I will tell you what that is: go into my cell as quickly as you can—draw out one of the feet that support the bed, you will find that it has been hollowed out for the purpose of containing a small phial you will see there half-filled with a red-looking fluid; bring it to me—or rather—no, no! —I may be found here, therefore help me back to my room while I have any strength to drag myself along;

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who knows what may happen? or how long the fit may last."

Spite of the magnitude of the misfortune which thus suddenly frustrated his hopes, Dantes lost not his presence of mind, but descended into the corridor dragging his unfortunate companion with him; then half carrying, half supporting him, he managed to reach the abbe's chamber, when he immediately laid the sufferer on his bed.

"Thanks!" said the poor abbe, shivering as though his veins were filled with ice. "Now that I am safely here, let me explain to you the nature of my attack, and the appearance it will represent. I am seized with a fit of catalepsy: when it comes to its height, I may probably lie still and motionless as though dead, uttering neither sigh nor groan. On the other hand, the symptoms may be much more violent, and cause me to fall into fearful convulsions, cover my lips with foam, and force from me the most piercing shrieks: this last evil you must carefully guard against, for were my cries to be heard, it is more than probable I should be removed to another part of the prison, and we be separated forever. When I become quite motionless, cold, and rigid as a corpse, then, and not before—you understand—force open my teeth with a chisel, pour from eight to ten drops of the liquor contained in the phial down my throat, and I may perhaps revive."

"Perhaps!" exclaimed Dantes, in grief-stricken tones.

"Help! help!" cried the abbe: "I—I—die—I—"

So sudden and violent was the fit, that the unfortunate prisoner was unable to complete the sentence began: a violent convulsion shook his whole frame, his eyes started from their sockets, his mouth was drawn on one side, his cheeks became purple, he struggled, foamed,

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dashed himself about, and uttered the most dreadful cries, which, however, Dantes prevented from being heard by covering his head with the blanket; the fit lasted two hours—then, more helpless than an infant, and colder and paler than marble, more crushed and broken than a reed trampled under foot, he stretched himself out as though in the agonies of death, and became of the ghastly hue of the tomb.

Edmond waited till life seemed extinct in the body of his friend: then taking up the chisel, he with difficulty forced open the closely fixed jaws, carefully poured the appointed number of drops down the rigid throat, and anxiously awaited the result.

An hour passed away without the old man's giving the least sign of returning animation. Dantes began to fear he had delayed too long ere he administered the remedy, and, thrusting his hands into his hair, continued gazing on the lifeless features of his friend in an agony of despair. At length a slight color tinged the livid cheeks, consciousness returned to the dull, open eyeballs; a faint sigh issued from the lips, and the sufferer made a feeble effort to move.

"He is saved!—he is saved!" cried Dantes, in a paroxysm of delight.

The sick man was not yet able to speak, but he pointed with evident anxiety towards the door. Dantes listened, and plainly distinguished the approaching steps of the jailer; it was therefore near seven o'clock; but Edmond's anxiety had put all thoughts of time out of his head.

Almost before the key had turned in the lock, and before the departing steps of the jailer had died away in the long corridor he had to traverse, Dantes, whose restless anxiety concerning his friend left him no desire to

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touch the food brought him, hurried back to the abbe's chamber, and, raising the stone by pressing his head against it, was soon beside the sick man's couch.

Faria had now fully regained his consciousness, but he still lay helpless and exhausted on his miserable bed.

"I did not expect to see you again," said he feebly to Dantes.

"And why not?" asked the young man; "did you fancy yourself dying?"

"No, I had no such idea; but, knowing that all was ready for your flight, I considered you had availed yourself of it and were gone."

The deep glow of indignation suffused the cheeks of Dantes.

"And did you really think so mean of me," cried he, "as to believe I would depart without you?"

"At least," said the abbe, "I now see how wrong such an opinion would have been. Alas! alas! I am fearfully exhausted and debilitated by this attack."

"Be of good cheer!" replied Dantes. "Your strength will return;" and as he spoke he seated himself on the bed beside Faria and tenderly chafed his chilled hands. The abbe shook his head.

"The former of these fits," said he, "lasted but half an hour. At the termination of which I experienced no other feeling than a great sensation of hunger; and I rose from my bed without requiring the least help. Now I can neither move my right arm nor leg, and my head seems uncomfortable, proving a rush of blood to the brain. The next of these fits will either carry me off or leave me paralyzed for life."

"No, no!" cried Dantes. "You are mistaken—you will not die! And your third attack (if, indeed, you

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should have another) will find you at liberty. We shall save you another time, as we have done this, only with a better chance, because we shall be able to command every requisite assistance."

"My good Edmond," answered the abbe, "be not deceived. The attack which has just passed away condemns me forever to the walls of a prison. None can fly from their dungeon but those who can walk."

"Well, well, perhaps just now you are not in a condition to effect your escape; but there is no hurry; we have waited so long we can very easily defer our purpose a little longer; say a week, a month—two, if necessary; by that time you will be quite well and strong; and as it only remains with us to fix the hour and minute, we will choose the first instant that you feel able to swim, to execute our project."

"I shall never swim again," replied Faria. "This arm is paralyzed; not for a time, but forever. Lift it, and judge by its weight if I am mistaken."

The young man raised the arm, which fell back by its own weight, perfectly inanimate and helpless. A sigh escaped him.

"You are convinced now, Edmond, are you not?" asked the abbe. "Depend upon it, I know what I say. Since the first attack I experienced of this malady, I have continually reflected on it. Indeed, I expected it, for it is a family inheritance; both my father and grandfather having been taken off by it. The physician who prepared for me the remedy I have twice successfully taken was no other than the celebrated Cabanis; and he predicted a similar end for me."

"The physician may be mistaken!" exclaimed Dantes. "And as for your poor arm, what difference will that make in our escape? Never mind, if you cannot swim.

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I can take you on my shoulders, and swim for both of us."

"My son," said the abbe, "you who are a sailor and a swimmer, must know as well as I do, that a man so loaded would sink ere he had advanced fifty yards in the sea. Cease, then, to allow yourself to be duped by vain hopes, that even your own excellent heart refuses to believe in. Here I shall remain till the hour of my deliverance arrives; and that, in all human probability, will be the hour of my death. As for you, who are young and active, delay not on my account, but fly—go—I give you back your promise."

"It is well," said Dantes. "And now hear my determination also." Then rising and extending his hand with an air of solemnity over the old man's head, he slowly added, "Here I swear to remain with you so long as life is spared you, and that death only shall divide us."

Faria gazed fondly on his noble-minded but single-hearted young friend, and read in his honest, open countenance ample confirmation of truthfulness, as well as sincere affection and faithful devotion.

"Thanks, my child," murmured the invalid, extending the one hand of which he still retained the use. "Thanks for your generous offer, which I accept as frankly as it was made." Then, after a short pause, he added, "You may one of these days reap the reward of your disinterested devotion; but as I cannot, and you will not, quit this place, it becomes necessary to fill up the excavation beneath the soldier's gallery; he might by chance find out the hollow sound produced by his footsteps over the excavated ground, and call the attention of his officer to the circumstance; that would bring about a discovery which would inevitably lead to our being

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separated. Go, then, and set about this work, in which, unhappily, I can offer you no assistance; keep at it all night, if necessary, and do not return here to-morrow till after the jailer has visited me. I shall have something of the greatest importance to communicate to you."

Dantes took the hand of the abbe in his, and affectionately pressed it. Faria smiled encouragingly on him, and the young man retired to his task, filled with a religious determination faithfully and unflinchingly to discharge the vow which bound him to his afflicted friend.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TREASURE.

WHEN Dantes returned next morning to the chamber of his companion in captivity, he found Faria seated and looking composed. In the ray of light which entered by the narrow window of his cell he held open in his left hand, of which alone, it will be recollected, he retained the use, a morsel of paper, which from being constantly rolled into a small compass had the form of a cylinder, and was not easily kept open. He did not speak, but showed the paper to Dantes.

"What is that?" he inquired.

"Look at it," said the abbe, with a smile.

"I have looked at it with all possible attention," said Dantes, "and I only see a half-burnt paper, on which are traces of Gothic characters traced with a peculiar kind of ink."

"This paper, my friend," said Faria, "I may now avow to you, since I have proved you—this paper is my treasure, of which, from this day forth, one half belongs to you."

A cold damp started to Dantes' brow. Until this day —and what a space of time!—he had avoided talking to the abbe of this treasure, the source whence the accusation of madness against the poor abbe was derived. With his instinctive delicacy Edmond had preferred

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avoiding any touch on this painful chord, and Faria had been equally silent. He had taken the silence of the old man for a return to reason, and now these few words uttered by Faria, after so painful a crisis, seemed to announce a serious relapse of mental alienation.

"Your treasure?" stammered Dantes. Faria smiled.

"Yes," said he. "You are, indeed, a noble heart, Edmond; and I see by your paleness and your shudder what is passing in your heart at this moment. No, be assured, I am not mad. This treasure exists, Dantes; and if I have not been allowed to possess it, you will. Yes—you. No one would listen to me or believe me because they thought me mad; but you, who must know that I am not, listen to me, and believe me afterwards if you will."

"Alas!" murmured Edmond to himself, "this is a terrible relapse! There was only this blow wanting." Then he said aloud, "My dear friend, your attack has fatigued you, had you not better repose a while? To-morrow, if you will, I will hear your narrative; but to-day I wish to nurse you carefully. Besides," he said, "a treasure is not a thing we need hurry."

"On the contrary, it must be hurried, Edmond!" replied the old man. "Who knows if to-morrow, or the next day after, the third attack may not come on? and then must not all be finished? Yes, indeed, I have often thought with a bitter joy that these riches, which would make the wealth of a dozen families, will be forever lost to those men who persecute me. This idea was one of vengeance to me, and I tasted it slowly in the night of my dungeon and the despair of my captivity. But now I have forgiven the world for the love of you; now I see you young and full of hope and prospect—now that I think of all that may result to you in the good fortune

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of such a disclosure, I shudder at any delay and tremble lest I should not assure to one so worthy as yourself the possession of so vast an amount of hidden treasure."

Edmond turned away his head with a sigh.

"You persist in your incredulity, Edmond," continued Faria. "My words have not convinced you. I see you require proofs. Well, then, read this paper, which I have never shown to any one."

"To-morrow, my dear friend," said Edmond, desirous of not yielding to the old man's madness. "I thought it was understood that we should not talk on that until to-morrow."

"Then we will not talk of it until to-morrow, but read this paper to-day."

"I will not irritate him," thought Edmond, and taking the paper, of which half was wanting, having been burnt, no doubt, by some accident, he read:

"'This treasure, which may amount to two
of Roman crowns in the most distant a
of the second opening wh
declare to belong to him alo
heir.
"'25th April, 1498.

"Well!" said Faria, when the young man had finished it.

"Why," replied Dantes, "I see nothing but broken lines and unconnected words, which are rendered illegible by fire."

"Yes, to you, my friend, who read them for the first time, but not for me, who have grown pale over them by many nights' study, and have reconstructed every phrase, completed every thought."

"And do you believe you have discovered the concealed sense?"

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"I am sure I have, and you shall judge for yourself; but first listen to the history of this paper."

"Silence!" exclaimed Dantes. "Steps approach, I go, adieu."

And Dantes, happy to escape the history and explanation which could not fail to confirm to him his friend's malady, glided like a snake along the narrow passage, whilst Faria, restored by his alarm to a kind of activity, pushed with his foot the stone into its place, and covered it with a mat in order the more effectually to avoid discovery.

It was the governor who, hearing of Faria's accident from the jailer, had come in person to see him.

Faria sat up to receive him, and continued to conceal from the governor the paralysis that had already half stricken him with death. His fear was, lest the governor, touched with pity, might order him to be removed to a prison more wholesome, and thus separate him from this young companion: but fortunately this was not the case, and the governor left him convinced that the poor madman, for whom in his heart he felt a kind of affection, was only affected with a slight indisposition.

During this time, Edmond, seated on his bed with his head in his hands, tried to collect his scattered thoughts. All was so rational, so grand, so logical with Faria, since he had known him, that he could not understand how much wisdom on all points could be allied to madness in any one; was Faria deceived as to his treasure, or was all the world deceived as to Faria?

Dantes remained in his cell all day, not daring to return to his friend, thinking thus to defer the moment when he should acquire the certainty that the abbe was mad—such a conviction would be so terrible!

But towards the evening, after the usual visitation,

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Faria, not seeing the young man appear, tried to move and get over the distance which separated them. Edmond shuddered when he heard the painful efforts which the old man made to drag himself along; his leg was inert, and he could no longer make use of one arm. Edmond was compelled to draw him towards himself, for otherwise he could not enter by the small aperture which led to Dantes' chamber.

"Here I am, pursuing you remorselessly," he said, with a benignant smile. "You thought to escape my munificence, but it is in vain. Listen to me."

Edmond saw there was no escape, and placing the old man on his bed, he seated himself on the stool beside him.

"You know," said the abbe, "that I was the secretary and intimate friend of the Cardinal Spada, the last of the princes of that name. I owe to this worthy lord all the happiness I ever knew. He was not rich, although the wealth of his family had passed into a proverb, and I heard the phrase very often, 'As rich as a Spada.' But he, like public rumor, lived on this reputation for wealth; his palace was my paradise. I instructed his nephews, who are dead, and when he was alone in the world I returned to him, by an absolute devotion to his will, all he had done for me during ten years.

"The house of the cardinal had no secrets for me. I had often seen my noble patron annotating ancient volumes, and eagerly searching amongst dusty family manuscripts. One day when I was reproaching him for his unavailing searches, and the kind of prostration of mind that followed them, he looked at me, and, smiling bitterly, opened a volume relating to the History of the City of Rome. There, in the twenty-ninth

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chapter of the 'Life of Pope Alexander VI.,' were the following lines, which I can never forget:

"'The great wars of Romagne had ended; Cæsar Borgia, who had completed his conquest, had need of money to purchase all Italy. The pope had also need of money to conclude with Louis, the twelfth king of France, formidable still in spite of his recent reverses; and it was necessary, therefore, to have recourse to some profitable speculation, which was a matter of great difficulty in the impoverished condition of exhausted Italy. His holiness had an idea. He determined to make two cardinals.'

"By choosing two of the greatest personages of Rome, especially rich men—*this* was the return the holy father looked for from his speculation. In the first place he had to sell the great appointments and splendid offices which the cardinals already held, and then he had the two hats to sell besides.

"There was a third view in the speculation, which will appear hereafter.

"The pope and Cæsar Borgia first found the two future cardinals: they were Jean Rospigliosi, who held four of the highest dignities of the holy seat; and Cæsar Spada, one of the noblest and richest of the Roman nobility; both felt the high honor of such a favor from the pope. They were ambitious: and, these found, Cæsar Borgia soon found purchasers for their appointments.

"The result was that Rospigliosi and Spada paid for being cardinals, and eight other persons paid for the offices the cardinals held before their elevation, and thus eight hundred thousand crowns entered into the coffers of the speculators.

"It is time now to proceed to the last part of the speculation. The pope having almost smothered Rospi-

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gliosi and Spada with caresses, having bestowed upon them the insignia of cardinal, and induced them to realize their fortunes, and fix themselves at Rome, the pope and Cæsar Borgia invited the two cardinals to dinner.

"This was a matter of contest between the holy father and his son. Cæsar thought they could make use of one of the means which he always had ready for his friends; that is to say, in the first place the famous key with which they requested certain persons to go and open a particular cupboard. This key was furnished with a small iron point—a negligence on the part of the locksmith. When this was pressed to effect the opening of the cupboard, of which the lock was difficult, the person was pricked by this small point, and died next day. Then there was the ring with the lion's head, which Cæsar wore when he meant to give certain squeezes of the hand. The lion bit the hand thus favored, and at the end of twenty-four hours the bite was mortal.

"Cæsar then proposed to his father either to ask the cardinals to open the cupboard, or give each a cordial squeeze of the hand, but Alexander VI. replied to him:

"'Whilst we are thinking of those worthy cardinals, Spada and Rospigliosi, let us ask both of them to a dinner. Something tells me that we shall regain this money. Besides, you forget, Cæsar, an indigestion declares itself immediately, whilst a prick or a bite occasions a day or two's delay.'

"Cæsar gave way before such cogent reasoning, and the cardinals were consequently invited to dinner.

"The table was laid in a vineyard belonging to the pope, near Saint-Pierre-es-Liens, a charming retreat which the cardinals knew very well by report.

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"Rospigliosi, quite giddy with his dignity, prepared his stomach, and assumed his best looks. Spada, a prudent man, and greatly attached to his only nephew, a young captain of the highest promise, took paper and pen and made his will.

"He then sent to his nephew to await him in the vicinity of the vineyard, but it appeared the servant did not find him.

"Spada knew the nature of these invitations; since Christianity, so eminently civilizing, had made progress in Rome, it was no longer a centurion who came from the tyrant with a message, 'Cæsar wills that you die,' but it was a legate *a latere*, who came with a smile on his lips to say from the pope, 'His holiness requests you will dine with him.'

"Spada set out about two o'clock to Saint-Pierre-es-Liens. The pope awaited him. The first figure that struck the eyes of Spada was that of his nephew, in full costume, and Cæsar Borgia paying him most marked attentions. Spada turned pale, as Cæsar looked at him with an ironical air, which proved that he had anticipated all, and that the snare was well spread.

"They began dinner, and Spada was only able to inquire of his nephew if he had received his message. The nephew replied no, perfectly comprehending the meaning of the question. It was too late, for he had already drunk a glass of excellent wine, placed for him expressly by the pope's butler. Spada at the same moment saw another bottle approach him, which he was pressed to taste. An hour afterwards a physician declared they were both poisoned through eating mushrooms. Spada died on the threshold of the vineyard; the nephew expired at his own door, making signs which his wife could not comprehend.

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"Then Cæsar and the pope hastened to lay hands on the heritage, under pretence of seeking for the papers of the dead man. But the inheritance consisted in this only, a scrap of paper on which Spada had written:

" 'I bequeath to my beloved nephew my coffers, my books, and, amongst others, my breviary with the gold corners, which I beg he will preserve in remembrance of his affectionate uncle.'

"The heirs sought everywhere, admired the breviary, laid hands on the furniture, and were greatly astonished that Spada, the rich man, was really the most miserable of uncles—no treasures—unless they were those of science composed in the library and laboratories. This was all. Cæsar and his father searched, examined, scrutinized, but found nothing, or at least very little; not exceeding a few thousand crowns in plate, and about the same in ready money; but the nephew had time to say to his wife before he expired:

" 'Look well among my uncle's papers; there is a will.'

"They sought even more thoroughly than the august heirs had done, but it was fruitless. There were two palaces and a vineyard behind the Palatine Hill, but in these days landed property had not much value, and the two palaces and the vineyard remained to the family as beneath the rapacity of the pope and his son.

"Months and years rolled on. Alexander VI. died poisoned—you know by what mistake. Cæsar, poisoned at the same time, escaped with coloring his skin like a snake, and assumed a new cuticle, on which the poison left spots like those we see on the skin of a tiger; then, compelled to quit Rome, he went and killed himself in obscurity in a night skirmish, scarcely noticed in history.

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"After the pope's death and his son's exile, it was supposed the Spada family would again make the splendid figure they had before the cardinal's time; but this was not the case. The Spadas remained in doubtful ease, a mystery hung over this dark affair, and the public rumor was that Cæsar, a better politician than his father, had carried off from the pope the fortune of the two cardinals. I say the two, because Cardinal Rospigliosi, who had not taken any precaution, was completely despoiled.

"Up to this time," said Faria interrupting the thread of his narrative, "this seems to you very ridiculous, no doubt, eh?"

"Oh! my friend," said Dantes, "on the contrary, it seems as if I were reading a most interesting narrative; go on, I pray of you."

"I will.

"The family began to feel accustomed to this obscurity. Years rolled on, and amongst the descendants some were soldiers, others diplomatists, some churchmen, some bankers, some grew rich, and some were ruined. I come now to the last of the family, whose secretary I was—the Comte de Spada.

"I had often heard him complain of the disproportion of his rank with his fortune; and I advised him to sink all he had in an annuity. He did so, and thus doubled his income.

"The celebrated breviary remained in the family, and was in the comte's possession. It had been handed down from father to son, for the singular clause of the only will that had been found had rendered it a real relic, preserved in the family with superstitious veneration. It was an illuminated book with beautiful Gothic characters, and so weighty with gold that a servant

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always carried it before the cardinal on days of great solemnity.

"At the sight of papers of all sorts, titles, contracts, parchments, which were kept in the archives of the family, all descending from the poisoned cardinal, I, like twenty servitors, stewards, secretaries before me, in my turn examined the immense bundles of documents; but in spite of the most accurate researches, I found—nothing. Yet I had read, I had even written a precise history of the Borgia family, for the sole purpose of assuring myself whether any increase of fortune had occurred to them on the death of the Cardinal Cæsar Spada; but could only trace the acquisition of the property of the Cardinal Rospigliosi, his companion in misfortune.

"I was then almost assured that the inheritance had neither profited the Borgias nor the family, but had remained unpossessed, like the treasures of the Arabian Nights, which slept in the bosom of the earth under the eyes of the genii. I searched, ransacked, counted, calculated a thousand and a thousand times the income and expenditure of the family for three hundred years. It was useless. I remained in my ignorance, and the Comte de Spada in his poverty.

"My patron died. He had reserved from his annuity his family papers, his library, composed of 5,000 volumes, and his famous breviary. All these he bequeathed to me, with a thousand Roman crowns, which he had in ready money, on condition that I would have said anniversary masses for the repose of his soul, and that I would draw up a genealogical tree and history of his house; all this I did scrupulously.

"Be easy, my dear Edmond, we are near the conclusion.

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"In 1807, a month before I was arrested, and fifteen days after the death of Comte de Spada, on the 25th of December (you will presently see how the date became fixed in my memory), I was reading for the thousandth time the papers I was arranging, for the palace was sold to a stranger; and I was going to leave Rome and settle at Florence, intending to take with me twelve thousand francs I possessed, my library and famous breviary; when, tired with my constant labor at the same thing, and overcome by a heavy dinner I had eaten, my head dropped on my hands, and I fell asleep about three o'clock in the afternoon.

"I awoke as the clock was striking six.

"I raised my head! all was in darkness. I rang for a light, but as no one came, I determined to find one for myself. It was indeed the habit of a philosopher which I should soon be under the necessity of adopting. I took a wax candle in one hand, and with the other groped about for a piece of paper (my match-box being empty) with which I hoped to produce a light from the small flame still playing on the embers. Fearing, however, to make use of any valuable piece of paper, I hesitated for a moment, then recollected that I had seen in the famous breviary, which was on the table beside me, an old paper quite yellow with age, and which had served as a marker for centuries, kept there by the request of the heirs. I felt for it, found it, twisted it up together, and putting it to the expiring flame, set light to it.

"But beneath my fingers, as if by magic, in proportion as the fire ascended, I saw yellowish characters appear on the paper. I grasped it in my hand, put out the flame as quickly as I could, lighted my taper in the fire itself, and opened the crumpled paper with inexpres-

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sible emotion, recognizing, when I had done so, that these characters had been traced by mysterious and sympathetic ink, only appearing when exposed to the fire; nearly one-third of the paper had been consumed by the flame. It was that you read this morning; read it again, Dantes, and then I will complete for you the incomplete words and unconnected sense."

Faria, with an air of triumph, offered the paper to Dantes, who this time read the following words, traced with an ink of a color which nearly resembled rust:

This 25th day of April, 1498, be
Alexander VI., and fearing that not
he may desire to become my heir, and re
and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned
my sole heir, that I have bu
and visited with me, that is in
island of Monte-Cristo all I poss
jewels, diamonds, gems, that I alone
may amount to nearly two mil
will find, on raising the twentieth ro
creek to the east in a right line. Two open
in these caves: the treasure is in the furthest a
which treasure I bequeath and leave en
as my sole heir.
25th April, 1498. CÆS

"And now," said the abbe, "read this other paper"; and he presented to Dantes a second leaf with fragments of lines written on it, which Dantes read as follows:

ing invited to dine with his holiness
content with making me pay for my hat,
serves for me the fate of Cardinals Caprara
I declare to my nephew Guida Spada
ried in a place he knows
the caves of the small
essed of ingots, gold, money,
know of the existence of this treasure, which
lions of Roman crowns, and which he
ck from the small
ings have been made
ngle in the second;
tire to him

AR † SPADA.

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Faria followed him with excited look.

"And now," he said, when he saw Dantes had read the last line, "put the two fragments together and judge for yourself."

Dantes obeyed, and the conjoined pieces gave the following:

This 25th day of April, 1498, be . . ing invited to dine with his holiness Alexander VI., and fearing that not . . content with making me pay for my hat, he may desire to become my heir, and re . . serves for me the fate of Cardinals Caprara and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned . . I declare to my nephew Guido Spada, my sole heir, that I have bu . . ried in a place he knows and has visited with me . . that is in . . .the caves of the small island of Monte-Cristo, all I poss . . essed of ingots, gold, money, jewels, diamonds, gems, that I alone . . know of the existence of this treasure, which may amount to nearly two mil . . lions of Roman crowns, and which he will find on raising the twentieth ro . . ck from the small creek to the east in a right line. Two open . . ings have been made in these caves; the treasure is in the furthest a . . ngle in the second; which treasure I bequeath and leave en . . tire to him as my sole heir.
25th April, 1498. CÆS . . AR † SPADA.

"Well, do you comprehend now?" inquired Faria.

"It is the declaration of Cardinal Spada, and the will so long sought for," replied Edmond, still incredulous.

"Of course; what else could it be?"

"And who completed it as it now is?"

"I did. Aided by the remaining fragments I guessed the rest; measuring the length of the lines by those of the paper, and divining the hidden meaning by means of what was in part revealed, as we are guided in a tavern by the small ray of the light above us."

"And what did you do when you arrived at this conclusion?"

"I resolved to set out, and did set out that very instant, carrying with me the beginning of my great work on forming Italy into one kingdom; but for some time the infernal police (who at this period, quite contrary to

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what Napoleon desired so soon as he had a son born to him, wished for a partition of provinces) had their eyes on me and my hasty departure, the cause of which they were unable to guess. Having aroused their suspicions, I was arrested at the very moment I was leaving Piombino.

"Now," continued Faria, addressing Dantes with an almost paternal expression, "now, my dear fellow, you know as much as I do myself. If ever we escape together, half of this treasure is yours. If I die here and you escape alone, the whole belongs to you."

"But," inquired Dantes, hesitating, "has this treasure no more legitimate possessor in this world than ourselves?"

"No, no; be easy on that score; the family is extinct. The last Comte de Spada, moreover, made me his heir; bequeathing to me this symbolic breviary, he bequeathed to me all it contained: no, no, make your mind satisfied on that point. If we lay hands on this fortune, we may enjoy it without remorse."

"And you say this treasure amounts to——"

"Two millions of Roman crowns; nearly thirteen millions of our money."

"Impossible," said Dantes, staggered at the enormous amount.

"Impossible! and why?" asked the old man. "The Spada family was one of the oldest and most powerful families in the fifteenth century; and in those times, when all speculation and occupation were wanting, those accumulations of gold and jewels were by no means rare; there are at this day Roman families perishing of hunger, though possessed of nearly a million in diamonds and jewels, handed down as heirlooms, and which they cannot touch."

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Edmond thought he was in a dream—he wavered between incredulity and joy.

"I have only kept this secret so long from you," continued Faria, "that I might prove you and then surprise you. Had we escaped before my attack of catalepsy, I should have conducted you to Monte-Cristo; now," he added with a sigh, "it is you who will conduct me thither. Well, Dantes, you do not thank me?"

"This treasure belongs to you, my dear friend," replied Dantes, "and to you only. I have no right to it. I am no relation of yours."

"You are my son, Dantes," exclaimed the old man. "You are the child of my captivity. My profession condemns me to celibacy. God has sent you to me to console, at one and the same time, the man who could not be a father, and the prisoner who could not get free."

And Faria extended the arm of which alone the use remained to him to the young man, who threw his own arms around his neck and wept bitterly.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE THIRD ATTACK.

Now that this treasure which had so long been the object of the abbe's meditations could insure the future happiness of him whom Faria really loved as a son, it had doubled its value in his eyes, and every day he expatiated on the amount, explaining to Dantes all the good which with thirteen or fourteen millions of francs a man could do in these days to his friends; and then Dantes' countenance became gloomy, for the oath of vengeance he had taken recurred to his memory, and he reflected how much ill in these times a man with thirteen or fourteen millions could do to his enemies.

The abbe did not know the Isle of Monte-Cristo, but Dantes knew it, and had often passed it, situated twenty-five miles from Pianosa, between Corsica and the Isle of Elba, and had once touched at it. This island was, always had been, and still is completely deserted. It is a rock of almost conical form, which seems as though produced by some volcanic effort from the depth to the surface of the ocean.

Dantes traced a plan of the island to Faria, and Faria gave Dantes advice as to the means he should employ to recover the treasure.

But Dantes was far from being as enthusiastic and con-

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fident as the old man. It was past a question now that Faria was not a lunatic, and the way in which he had achieved the discovery, which had given rise to the suspicion of his madness, increased his admiration of him; but at the same time he could not believe that that deposit, supposing it had ever existed, still existed, and though he considered the treasure as by no means chimerical, he yet believed it was no longer there.

However, as if fate resolved on depriving the prisoners of their last chance, and making them understand that they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, a new misfortune befell them: the gallery on the seaside, which had long been in ruins, was rebuilt. They had repaired it completely, and stopped up with vast masses of stone the hole Dantes had partly filled in. But for this precaution, which it will be remembered the abbe had made to Edmond, the misfortune would have been still greater, for their attempt to escape would have been detected, and they would unfortunately have been separated. Thus, a fresh and even stronger door was closed upon them.

"You see," said the young man, with an air of sorrowful resignation, to Faria, "God deems it right to take from me even what you call my devotion to you. I have promised you to remain forever with you, and now I could not break my promise if I would. I shall no more have the treasure than you, and neither of us will quit this prison. But my real treasure is not that, my dear friend, which awaits me beneath the sombre rocks of Monte-Cristo, but it is your presence, our living together five or six hours a day in spite of our jailers; it is those rays of intelligence you have elicited from my brain, the languages you have implanted in my memory, and which spring there with all their philological

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ramifications. These different sciences that you have made so easy to me by the depth of the knowledge you possess of them, and the clearness of the principles to which you have reduced them, this is my treasure, my beloved friend, and with this you have made me rich and happy. Believe me, and take comfort, this is better for me than tons of gold and cases of diamonds, even were they not as problematical as the clouds we see in the morning floating over the sea, which we take for *terra firma* and which evaporate and vanish as we draw near to them. To have you as long as possible near me, to hear your eloquent voice, which I trust embellishes my mind, strengthens my soul, and makes my whole frame capable of great and terrible things, if I should ever be free, so fills my whole existence, that the despair to which I was just on the point of yielding when I knew you, has no longer any hold over me; and this—this is my fortune—not chimerical but actual. I owe you my real good, my present happiness; and all the sovereigns of the earth, were they Cæsar Borgias, could not deprive me of this."

Thus, if not actually happy, yet the days these two unfortunates passed together went quickly. Faria, who for so long a time had kept silence as to the treasure, now perpetually talked of it. As he had said, he remained paralyzed in the right arm and the left leg, and had given up all hope of ever enjoying himself. But he was continually thinking over some means of escape for his young companion, and he enjoyed it for him. For fear the letter might be some day lost or abstracted, he compelled Dantes to learn it by heart, and he thus knew it from one end to the other.

Then he destroyed the second portion, assured that if the first was seized, no one would be able to penetrate

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its real meaning. Whole hours sometimes passed whilst Faria was giving instructions to Dantes—instructions which were to serve him when he was at liberty. Then once free, from the day and hour and moment when he was so he could have but one only thought, which was to gain Monte-Cristo by some means, and remain there alone under some pretext which would give no suspicions, and once there to endeavor to find the wonderful caverns, and search in the appointed spot. The appointed spot, be it remembered, being the farthest angle in the second opening.

In the mean while the hours passed, if not rapidly, at least tolerably. Faria, as we have said, without having recovered the use of his hand and foot, had resumed all the clearness of his understanding; and had gradually, besides the moral instructions we have detailed, taught his youthful companion the patient and sublime duty of a prisoner, who learns to make something from nothing. They were thus perpetually employed. Faria, that he might not see himself grow old; Dantes, for fear of recalling the almost extinct past, which now only floated in his memory like a distant light wandering in the night. All went on as if in existences in which misfortune has deranged nothing and which glide on mechanically and tranquilly beneath the eye of Providence.

But beneath this superficial calm there were in the heart of the young man, and perhaps in that of the old man, many repressed desires, many stifled sighs, which found vent when Faria was left alone, and when Edmond returned to his cell.

One night Edmond awoke suddenly, believing he heard some one calling him.

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He opened his eyes, and tried to pierce through the gloom.

His name, or rather a plaintive voice, which essayed to pronounce his name, reached him.

"Alas!" murmured Edmond, "can it be?"

He moved his bed, drew up the stone, rushed into the passage, and reached the opposite extremity; the secret entrance was open.

By the light of the wretched and wavering lamp, of which we have spoken, Dantes saw the old man, pale, but yet erect, clinging to the bedstead. His features were writhing with those horrible symptoms which he already knew, and had so seriously alarmed him when he saw them for the first time.

"Alas!" my dear friend," said Faria in a resigned tone, "you understand, do you not, and I need not attempt to explain to you?"

Edmond uttered a cry of agony, and, quite out of his senses, rushed towards the door, exclaiming:

"Help! help!"

Faria had just sufficient strength to retain him.

"Silence!" he said, "or you are lost. Think now of yourself only, my dear friend, act so as to render your captivity supportable or your flight possible. It would require years to renew only what I have done here, and which would be instantly destroyed if our jailers knew we had communicated with each other. Besides, be assured, my dear Edmond, the dungeon I am about to leave will not long remain empty; some other unfortunate being will soon take my place, and to him you will appear like an angel of salvation. Perhaps he will be young, strong, and enduring, like yourself, and will aid you in your escape, whilst I have been but a hindrance. You will no longer have half a dead body tied to you to

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paralyze all your movements. At length Providence has done something for you; he restores to you more than he takes away, and it was time I should die."

Edmond could only clasp his hands and exclaim:

"Oh, my friend! my friend! speak not thus!" and then resuming all his presence of mind, which had for a moment staggered under this blow, and his strength, which had failed at the words of the old man, he said: "Oh! I have saved you once, and I will save you a second time!"

And raising the foot of the bed he drew out the phial, still a third filled with the red liquor.

"See!" he exclaimed, "there remains still some of this saving draught. Quick! quick! tell me what I must do this time—are there any fresh instructions? Speak, my friend, I listen."

"There is not a hope," replied Faria, shaking his head; "but no matter, God wills it that man, whom he has created, and in whose heart he has so profoundly rooted the love of life, should do all in his power to preserve that existence which, however painful it may be, is yet always so dear."

"Oh! yes, yes!" exclaimed Dantes, "and I tell you you shall be saved!"

"Well, then, try! the cold gains upon me. I feel the blood flowing towards my brain. This horrible trembling, which makes my teeth chatter and seems to dislocate my bones, begins to pervade my whole frame; in five minutes the malady will reach its height, and in a quarter of an hour there will be nothing left of me but a corpse."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dantes, his heart wrung with anguish.

"Do as you did before, only do not wait so long. All

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the springs of life are now exhausted in me, and death," he continued, looking at his paralyzed arm and leg, "has but half its work to do. If, after having made me swallow twelve drops instead of ten, you see I do not recover, then pour the rest down my throat. Now lift me on my bed, for I can no longer support myself."

Edmond took the old man in his arms and laid him on the bed.

"And now, my dear friend," said Faria, "sole consolation of my wretched existence—you whom Heaven gave me somewhat late, but still gave me a priceless gift, and for which I am most grateful—at the moment of separating from you forever, I wish you all the happiness and all the prosperity you so well deserve. My son, I bless thee!"

The young man cast himself on his knees, leaning his head against the old man's bed.

"Listen now to what I say in this my dying moment. The treasure of the Spadas exists. God grants me that there no longer exists for me distance or obstacle. I see it in the depths of the inner cavern. My eyes pierce the innermost recesses of the earth and are dazzled at the sight of so much riches. If you do escape, remember that the poor abbe whom all the world called mad, was not so. Hasten to Monte-Cristo—avail yourself of the fortune—for you have indeed suffered long enough."

A violent shock interrupted the old man. Dantes raised his head, and saw Faria's eyes injected with blood. It seemed as if a flow of blood had ascended from the chest to the head.

"Adieu! adieu!" murmured the old man, clasping Edmond's hand convulsively—"adieu!"

"Oh, no—no, not yet," he cried, "do not forsake me! Oh! succor him! Help! help! help!"

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"Hush! hush!" murmured the dying man, "that they may not separate us if you save me!"

"You are right. Oh, yes, yes! be assured, I shall save you. Besides, although you suffer much, you do not seem in such agony as before."

"Do not mistake! I suffer less because there is in me less strength to endure it. At your age we have faith in life; it is the privilege of youth to believe and hope, but old men see death more clearly. Oh! 'tis here—'tis here—'tis over—my sight is gone—my reason escapes! Your hand, Dantes! Adieu—adieu!"

And raising himself by a final effort, in which he summoned all his faculties, he said:

"Monte-Cristo! forget not Monte-Cristo!"

And he fell back in his bed.

The crisis was terrible; his twisted limbs, his swollen eyelids, a foam of blood and froth in his lips, a frame quite rigid, was soon extended on this bed of agony in place of the intellectual being who was there but so lately.

Dantes took the lamp, placed it on a projecting stone above the bed, whence its tremulous light fell with strange and fantastic ray on this discomposed countenance and this motionless and stiffened body. With fixed eyes he awaited boldly the moment for administering the hoped-for restorative. When he believed the instant had arrived, he took the knife, unclosed the teeth, which offered less resistance than before, counted one after the other twelve drops, and watched; the phial contained, perhaps, twice as much more.

He waited ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, half an hour; nothing moved. Trembling, his hair erect, his brow bathed with perspiration, he counted the seconds by the beatings of his heart.

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Then he thought it was time to make the last trial, and he put the phial to the violet lips of Faria, and, without having occasion to force open his jaws, which had remained extended, he poured the whole of the liquid down his throat.

The draught produced a galvanic effect.

A violent trembling pervaded the old man's limbs; his eyes opened until it was fearful to gaze upon them; he heaved a sigh which resembled a shriek, and then all this vibrating frame returned gradually to its state of immobility; only the eyes remained open.

Half an hour, an hour, an hour and a half, elapsed, and during this time of anguish Edmond leaned over his friend, his hand applied to his heart, and felt the body gradually grow cold, and the heart's pulsations become more and more deep and dull, until at length all stopped: the last movement of the heart ceased, the face became livid, the eyes remained open, but the look was glazed.

It was six o'clock in the morning; the dawn was just breaking, and its weak rays came into the dungeon and paled the ineffectual light of the lamp. Singular shaddows passed over the countenance of the dead man, which at times gave it the appearance of life. Whilst this struggle between day and night lasted, Dantes still doubted; but as soon as the daylight gained the preeminence he saw that he was alone with a corpse.

Then an invisible and extreme terror seized upon him and he dared not again press the hand that hung out of bed, he dared no longer to gaze on those fixed and vacant eyes, which he tried many times to close, but in vain—they opened again as soon as shut. He extinguished the lamp, carefully concealed it, and then went away, closing as well as he could the entrance to the secret passage by the large stone as he descended.

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It was time, for the jailer was coming. On this occasion he began his rounds at Dantes' cell, and on leaving him he went on to Faria's dungeon, where he was taking breakfast and some linen.

Nothing betokened that the man knew anything of what had occurred. He went on his way.

Dantes was then seized with an indescribable desire to know what was going on in the dungeon of his unfortunate friend. He therefore returned by the subterraneous gallery, and arrived in time to hear the exclamations of the turnkey, who called out for help.

Other turnkeys came, and then was heard the regular tramp of soldiers even when not on duty—behind them came the governor.

Edmond heard the noise of the bed in which they were moving the corpse, heard the voice of the governor, who desired them to throw water on the face, and seeing that in spite of this application the prisoner did not recover, sent for the doctor.

The governor then went out, and some words of pity fell on Dantes' listening ears, mingled with brutal laughter.

"Well! well!" said one, "the madman has gone to look after his treasure. Good journey to him!"

"With all his millions he will not have enough to pay for his shroud!" said another.

"Oh!" added a third voice, "the shrouds of the Chateau d'If are not dear!"

"Perhaps," said one of the previous speakers, "as he was a churchman, they may go to some expense in his behalf."

"They may give him the honors of the sack."

Edmond did not lose a word, but comprehended very little of what was said. The voices soon ceased, and

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it seemed to him as if the persons had all left the cell. Still he dared not to enter as they might have left some turnkey to watch the dead body.

He remained, therefore, mute and motionless, restraining even his respiration.

At the end of an hour he heard a faint noise, which increased. It was the governor who returned, followed by the doctor and other attendants.

There was a moment's silence; it was evident that the doctor was examining the dead body.

The inquiries soon commenced.

The doctor analyzed the symptoms of the malady under which the prisoner had sunk, and declared he was dead.

Questions and answers followed in a manner that made Dantes indignant, for he felt that all the world should experience for the poor abbe the love he bore him.

"I am very sorry for what you tell me," said the governor, replying to the assurance of the doctor, "that the old man is really dead, for he was a quiet, inoffensive prisoner, happy in his folly, and required no watching."

"Ah!" added the turnkey, "there was no occasion for watching him; he would have stayed here fifty years, I'll answer for it, without any attempt to escape."

"Still," said the governor, "I believe it will be requisite, notwithstanding your certainty, and not that I doubt your science, but for my own responsibility's sake, that we should be perfectly assured that the prisoner is dead."

There was a moment of complete silence, during which Dantes, still listening, felt assured that the doctor was examining and touching the corpse a second time.

"You may make your mind easy," said the doctor; "he is dead. I will answer for that."

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"You know, sir," said the governor, persisting, "that we are not content in such cases as this with such a simple examination. In spite of all appearances, be so kind, therefore, as to finish your duty by fulfilling the formalities prescribed by law."

"Let the irons be heated," said the doctor; "but really it is an useless precaution."

This order to heat the irons made Dantes shudder. He heard hasty steps, the creaking of a door, people going and coming, and some minutes afterwards a turnkey entered, saying:

"Here is the braiser lighted."

There was a moment's silence, and then was heard the noise made by burning flesh, of which the peculiar and nauseous smell penetrated even behind the wall where Dantes was listening horrified.

At this smell of human flesh carbonized, the damp came over the young man's brow, and he felt as if he should faint.

"You see, sir, he is really dead," said the doctor; "this burn in the heel is decisive; the poor fool is cured of his folly, and delivered from his captivity."

"Wasn't his name Faria?" inquired one of the officers who accompanied the governor.

"Yes, sir; and as he said, it was an ancient name; he was, too, very learned, and rational enough on all points which did not relate to his treasure; but on that, indeed he was obstinate."

"It is the sort of malady which we call monomania," said the doctor.

"You never had anything to complain of?" said the governor to the jailer.

"Never, sir," replied the jailer, "never—on the contrary, he sometimes amused me very much by telling

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me stories. One day, too, when my wife was ill, he gave me a prescription which cured her."

"Ah, ah!" said the doctor, "I was ignorant that I had a competitor; but I hope, M. le Gouverneur, that you will show him all proper respect in consequence."

"Yes, yes; make your mind easy; he shall be decently interred in the newest sack we can find. Will that satisfy you?"

"Must we do this last formality in your presence, sir?" inquired a turnkey.

"Certainly. But make haste. I cannot stay here all day."

Fresh footsteps, going and coming, were now heard, and a moment afterwards the noise of cloth being rubbed reached Dante's ears, the bed creaked on its hinges, and the heavy foot of a man, who lifts a weight, resounded on the floor; then the bed again creaked under the weight deposited upon it.

"In the evening!" said the governor.

"Will there be any mass?" asked one of the attendants.

"That is impossible," replied the governor. "The chaplain of the Chateau came to me yesterday to beg for leave of absence in order to take a trip to Hyeres for a week. I told him I would attend to the prisoners in his absence. If the poor abbe had not been in such a hurry, he might have had his requiem."

"Pooh! pooh!" said the doctor, with the accustomed impiety of persons of his profession, "he is a churchman. God will respect his profession and not give the devil the wicked delight of sending him a priest."

A shout of laughter followed this brutal jest.

During this time the operation of putting the body in the sack was going on.

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"This evening," said the governor when the task was ended.

"At what o'clock?" inquired a turnkey.

"Why, about ten or eleven o'clock."

"Shall we watch by the corpse?"

"Of what use would it be? Shut the dungeon as if he were alive—that is all."

Then the steps retreated, and the voices died away in the distance; the noise of the door with its creaking hinges and bolts ceased, and a silence duller than any solitude ensued, the silence of death, which pervaded all, and struck its icy chill through the young man's whole frame. Then he raised the flag-stone cautiously with his head, and looked carefully round the chamber.

It was empty, and Dantes, quitting the passage, entered it.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE CEMETERY OF THE CHATEAU D'IF.

On the bed, at full length, and faintly lighted by the pale ray that penetrated the window, was visible a sack of coarse cloth, under the large folds of which was stretched a long and stiffened form; it was Faria's last winding sheet—a winding sheet which, as the turnkey said, cost so little. All then was completed. A material separation had taken place between Dantes and his old friend—he could no longer see those eyes which had remained open as if to look even beyond death; he could no longer clasp that hand of industry which had lifted for him the veil that had concealed hidden and obscure things. Faria, the usual and the good companion, with whom he was accustomed to live so intimately, no longer breathed. He seated himself on the edge of that terrible bed, and fell into a melancholy and gloomy reverie.

Alone! he was alone again! again relapsed into silence! he found himself once again in the presence of nothingness!

Alone! no longer to see—no longer to hear the voice of the only human being who attached him to life! Was it not better, like Faria, to seek the presence of his Maker and learn the enigma of life at the risk of passing through the mournful gate of intense suffering?

The idea of suicide, driven away by his friend, and

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forgotten in his presence whilst living, arose like a phantom before him in the presence of his dead body.

"If I could die," he said, "I should go where he goes, and should assuredly find him again. But how to die? It is very easy," he continued, with a smile of bitterness, "I will remain here, rush on the first person that opens the door, will strangle him, and then they will guillotine me."

But as it happens that in excessive griefs, as in great tempests, the abyss is found between the tops of the loftiest waves, Dantes recoiled from the idea of this infamous death, and passed suddenly from despair to an ardent desire for life and liberty.

"Die! oh, no," he exclaimed, "not die now, after having lived and suffered so long and so much! Die! yes, had I died years since, but now it would be indeed to give way to my bitter destiny. No, I desire to live, I desire to struggle to the very last. I wish to reconquer the happiness of which I have been deprived. Before I die I must not forget that I have my executioners to punish, and, perhaps, too, who knows, some friends to reward. Yet they will forget me here, and I shall die in my dungeon like Faria."

As he said this, he remained motionless, his eyes fixed like a man struck with a sudden idea, but whom this idea fills with amazement. Suddenly he rose, lifted his hand to his brow as if his brain were giddy, paced twice or thrice round his chamber, and then paused abruptly at the bed.

"Ah! ah!" he muttered, "who inspires me with this thought? Is that thou, gracious God? Since none but the dead pass freely from this dungeon, let me assume the place of the dead!"

Without giving himself time to reconsider his deci-

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sion, and indeed that he might not allow his thoughts to be distracted from his desperate resolution, he bent over the appalling sack, opened it with the knife which Faria had made, drew the corpse from the sack, and transported it along the gallery to his own chamber, laid it on his couch, passed round its head the rag he wore at night round his own, covered it with his counterpane, once again kissed the ice-cold brow, and tried vainly to close the resisting eyes, which glared horribly; turned the head towards the wall, so that the jailer might, when he brought his evening meal, believe that he was asleep, as was his frequent custom; returned along the gallery, threw the bed against the wall, returned to the other cell, took from the hiding place the needle and thread, flung off his rags, that they might feel naked flesh only beneath the coarse sackcloth; and getting inside the sack, placed himself in the posture in which the dead body had been laid, and sewed up the mouth of the sack inside.

The beating of his heart might have been heard, if by any mischance the jailers had entered at that moment.

Dantes might have waited until the evening visit was over, but he was afraid the governor might change his resolution, and order the dead body to be removed earlier.

In that case his last hope would have been destroyed.

Now his project was settled under any circumstances, and he hoped thus to carry it into effect.

If, during the time he was being conveyed, the gravediggers should discover that they were conveying a live instead of a dead body, Dantes did not intend to give them time to recognize him, but, with a sudden cut of the knife, he meant to open the sack from top to bottom,

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and, profiting by their alarm, escape; if they tried to catch him, he would use his knife.

If they conducted him to the cemetery and laid him in the grave, he would allow himself to be covered with earth, and then, as it was night, the grave-diggers could scarcely have turned their backs ere he would have worked his way through the soft soil and escape, hoping that the weight would not be too heavy for him to support.

If he was deceived in this, and the earth proved too heavy, he would be stifled, and then, so much the better, all would be over. Dantes had not eaten since the previous evening, but he had not thought of hunger or thirst, nor did he now think of it. His position was too precarious to allow even time to reflect on any thought but one.

The first risk that Dantes ran was that the jailer, when he brought him his supper at seven o'clock, might perceive the substitution he had effected; fortunately, twenty times, at least, from misanthropy or fatigue, Dantes had received his jailer in bed, and then the man placed his bread and soup on the table, and went away without saying a word.

This time the jailer might not be silent as usual, but speak to Dantes, and seeing that he received no reply, go to the bed, and thus discover all.

When seven o'clock came, Dantes' agony really commenced. His hand placed on his heart was unable to repress its throbbings, whilst, with the other, he wiped the perspiration from his temples. From time to time shudderings ran through his whole frame, and collapsed his heart as if it were frozen. Then he thought he was going to die. Yet the hours passed on without any stir in the Chateau, and Dantes felt he had escaped

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his first danger; it was a good augury. At length about the hour the governor had appointed, footsteps were heard on the stairs. Edmond felt that the moment had arrived, and summoning up all his courage, held his breath, happy if at the same time he could have repressed in like manner the hasty pulsation of his arteries.

They stood at the door — there were two steps, and Dantes guessed it was the two grave-diggers who came to seek him—this idea was soon converted into certainty, when he heard the noise they made in putting down the hand-bier.

The door opened, and a dim light reached Dantes' eyes through the coarse sack that covered him, he saw two shadows approach his bed, a third remaining at the door with a torch in his hand. Each of these two men, approaching the ends of the bed, took the sack by its extremities.

"He's heavy, though, for an old and thin man," said one, as he raised the head.

"They say every year adds half a pound to the weight of the bones," said another, lifting the feet.

"Have you tied the knot?" inquired the first speaker.

"What would be the use of carrying so much more weight?" was the reply: "I can do that when we get there."

"Yes, you're right," replied the companion.

"What's the knot for?" thought Dantes.

They deposited the supposed corpse on the bier. Edmond stiffened himself in order to play his part of a dead man, and then the party, lighted by the man with the torch, who went first, ascended the stairs.

Suddenly he felt the fresh and sharp night air, and Dantes recognized the *Mistral*. It was a sudden sensation, at the same time replete with delight and agony.

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The bearers advanced twenty paces, then stopped, putting their bier down on the ground.

One of them went away, and Dantes heard his shoes on the pavement.

"Where am I, then?" he asked himself.

"Really, he is by no means a light load," said the other bearer, sitting down on the edge of the handbarrow.

Dantes' first impulse was to escape, but fortunately he did not attempt it.

"Light me, you, sir," said the other bearer, "or I shall not find what I am looking for."

The man with the torch complied, although not asked in the most polite terms.

"What can he be looking for," thought Edmond. "The spade, perhaps."

An exclamation of satisfaction indicated that the grave-digger had found the object of his search.

"Here it is at last," he said, "not without some trouble, though."

"Yes," was the answer, "but it has lost nothing by waiting."

As he said this the man came towards Edmond, who heard a heavy and sounding substance laid down beside him, and at the same moment a cord was fastened round his feet with sudden and painful violence.

"Well, have you tied the knot?" inquired the grave-digger, who was looking on.

"Yes, and pretty tight too, I can tell you," was the answer.

"Move on, then."

And the bier was lifted once more, and they proceeded.

They advanced fifty paces farther, and then stopped to open a door, then went forward again. The noise of

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the waves dashing against the rocks, on which the Chateau is built, reached Dantes' ear distinctly as they progressed.

"Bad weather!" observed one of the bearers; "not a pleasant night for a dip in the sea."

"Why, yes, the abbe runs a chance of being wet," said the other; and then there was a burst of brutal laughter.

Dantes did not comprehend the jest, but his hair stood erect on his head.

"Well, here we are at last," said one of them. "A little farther—a little farther," said the other. "You know very well that the last was stopped on his way, dashed on the rocks, and the governor told us next day that we were careless fellows."

They ascended five or six more steps, and then Dantes felt that they took him one by the head and the other by the heels, and swung him to and fro.

"One!" said the grave-diggers. "Two! Three, and away!"

And at the same instant Dantes felt himself flung into the air like a wounded bird falling, falling with a rapidity that made his blood curdle. Although drawn downwards by the same heavy weight which hastened his rapid descent, it seemed to him as if the time were a century. At last, with a terrific dash, he entered the ice-cold water, and as he did so, he uttered a shrill cry, stifled in a moment by his immersion beneath the waves.

Dantes had been flung into the sea, into whose depths he was dragged by a thirty-six pound shot tied to his feet.

The sea is the Cemetery of the Chateau d'If.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE ISLE OF TIBOULEN.

DANTES, although giddy, and almost suffocated, had yet sufficient presence of mind to hold his breath; and as his right hand (prepared as he was for every chance) held his knife open, he rapidly ripped up the sack, extricated his arm, and then his body; but in spite of all his efforts to free himself from the bullet, he felt it dragging him down still lower; he then bent his body, and by a desperate effort severed the cord that bound his legs at the moment he was suffocating. With a vigorous spring he rose to the surface of the sea, whilst the bullet bore to its depths the sack that had so nearly become his shroud.

Dantes merely paused to breathe, and then dived again in order to avoid being seen.

When he rose a second time he was fifty paces from where he had first sunk. He saw overhead a black and tempestuous sky, over which the wind was driving the fleeting vapors that occasionally suffered a twinkling star to appear; before him was the vast expanse of waters, sombre and terrible, whose waves foamed and roared as if before the approach of a storm. Behind him, blacker than the sea, blacker than the sky, rose like a phantom the giant of granite, whose projecting crags seemed like arms extended to seize their prey; and on

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the highest rock was a torch that lighted two figures. He fancied these two forms were looking at the sea; doubtless these strange grave-diggers had heard his cry. Dantes dived again, and remained a long time beneath the water. This manœuvre was already familiar to him, and usually attracted a crowd of spectators in the bay before the light-house at Marseilles when he swam there, and who, with one accord, pronounced him the best swimmer in the port.

When he reappeared the light had disappeared.

It was necessary to strike out to sea. Ratonneau and Pomegue are the nearest isles of all those that surround the Chateau d'If. But Ratonneau and Pomegue are inhabited, together with the Islet of Daume; Tiboulen or Lemaire were the most secure. The isles of Tiboulen and Lemaire are a league from the Chateau d'If. Dantes, nevertheless, determined to make for them; but how could he find his way in the darkness of the night?

At this moment he saw before him, like a brilliant star, the light-house of Planier. By leaving this light on the right, he kept the Isle of Tiboulen a little on the left; by turning to the left, therefore, he would find it. But, as we have said, it was at least a league from the Chateau d'If to this island.

Often in prison Faria had said to him when he saw him idle and inactive:

"Dantes, you must not give way to this listlessness; you will be drowned if you seek to escape; and your strength has not been properly exercised and prepared for exertion."

These words rang in Dantes' ears even beneath the waves; he hastened to cleave his way through them to see if he had not lost his strength; he found with pleasure that his captivity had taken away nothing of

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his power, and that he was still master of that element on whose bosom he had so often sported as a boy.

Fear, that relentless pursuer, clogged Dantes' efforts; he listened if any noise was audible; each time that he rose over the waves his looks scanned the horizon, and strove to penetrate the darkness: every wave seemed a boat in his pursuit, and he redoubled exertions that increased his distance from the Chateau, but the repetition of which weakened his strength. He swam on still, and already the terrible Chateau had disappeared in the darkness. He could not see it, but he *felt* its presence. An hour passed, during which Dantes, excited by the feeling of freedom, continued to cleave the waves.

"Let us see," said he, "I have swam above an hour; but as the wind is against me, that has retarded my speed; however, if I am not mistaken, I must be close to the Isle of Tiboulen. But what if I were mistaken?"

A shudder passed over him. He sought to tread water in order to rest himself, but the sea was too violent, and he felt that he could not make use of this means of repose.

"Well," said he, "I will swim on until I am worn out or the cramp seizes me, and then I shall sink;" and he struck out with the energy of despair.

Suddenly the sky seemed to him to him to become still darker and more dense, and compact clouds lowered towards him; at the same time he felt a violent pain in his knee; his imagination told him a ball had struck him, and that in a moment he would hear the report; but he heard nothing. Dantes put out his hand and felt resistance; he then extended his leg and felt the land, and in an instant guessed the nature of the object he had taken for a cloud.

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Before him rose a mass of strangely formed rocks that resembled nothing so much as a vast fire petrified at the moment of its most fervent combustion. It was the Isle of Tiboulen. Dantes rose, advanced a few steps, and with a fervent prayer of gratitude stretched himself on the granite, which seemed to him softer than down. Then, in spite of the wind and rain, he fell into the deep, sweet sleep of those worn out by fatigue.

At the expiration of an hour Edmond was awakened by the roar of the thunder. The tempest was unchained and let loose in all its fury; from time to time a flash of lightning stretched across the heavens like a fiery serpent, lighting up the clouds that rolled on like the waves of an immense chaos.

Dantes had not been deceived, he had reached the first of the two isles, which was in reality Tiboulen. He knew that it was barren, without shelter; but when the sea became more calm, he resolved to plunge into its waves again, and swim to Lemaire, equally arid, but larger, and consequently better adapted for concealment.

An overhanging rock offered him a temporary shelter; and scarcely had he availed himself of it when the tempest burst forth in all its fury. Edmond felt the rock beneath which he lay trembling; the waves, dashing themselves against the granite rock, wetted him with their spray. In safety as he was, he felt himself become giddy in the midst of this war of the elements, and the dazzling brightness of the lightning. It seemed to him that the island trembled to its base, and that it would, like a vessel at anchor, break her moorings, and bear him off into the centre of the storm.

He then recollected that he had not eaten or drunk for four-and twenty hours. He extended his hands and

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drank greedily of the rain-water that had lodged in a hollow of the rock.

As he rose, a flash of lightning, that seemed as if the whole of the heavens were opened, illuminated the darkness. By its light, between the Isle of Lemaire and Cape Croiselle, a quarter of a league distant, Dantes saw, like a spectre, a fishing boat driven rapidly on by the force of the winds and waves. A second after he saw it again approaching nearer. Dantes cried at the top of his voice to warn them of their danger, but they saw it themselves. Another flash showed him four men clinging to the shattered mast and the rigging, while a fifth clung to the broken rudder.

The men he beheld saw him, doubtless, for their cries were carried to his ears by the wind. Above the splintered mast a sail rent to tatters was waving; suddenly the ropes that still held it gave away, and it disappeared in the darkness of the night, like a vast seabird. At the same moment a violent crash was heard, and cries of distress. Perched on the summit of the rock, Dantes saw by the lightning the vessel in pieces: and amongst the fragments were visible the agonized features of the unhappy sailors. Then all became dark again.

Dantes ran down the rocks at the risk of being himself dashed to pieces; he listened, he strove to examine, but he heard and saw nothing — all human cries had ceased; and the tempest alone continued to rage.

By degrees the wind abated; vast gray clouds rolled towards the west; and the blue firmament appeared studded with bright stars. Soon a red streak became visible in the horizon; the waves whitened, a light played over them, and gilded their foaming crests with gold. It was day.

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Dantes stood silent and motionless before this vast spectacle; for since his captivity he had forgotten it.

He turned towards the fortress, and looked both at the sea and the land.

The gloomy building rose from the bosom of the ocean with that imposing majesty of inanimate objects, that seems at once to watch and to command.

It was about five o'clock; the sea continued to grow calmer.

"In two or three hours," thought Dantes, "the turnkey will enter my chamber, find the body of my poor friend, recognize it, seek for me in vain; and give the alarm. Then the passage will be discovered, the men who cast me into the sea, and who must have heard the cry I uttered, will be questioned. The boats filled with armed soldiers will pursue the wretched fugitive. The cannon will warn every one to refuse shelter to a man wandering about naked and famished. The police of Marseilles will be on the alert by land, whilst the governor pursues me by sea. I am cold, I am hungry, I have lost even the knife that saved me. Oh, my God! I have suffered enough, surely. Have pity on me, and do for me what I am unable to do for myself."

As Dantes (his eyes turned in the direction of the Chateau d'If) uttered this prayer, he saw appear at the extremity of the Isle of Pomegue, like a bird skimming over the sea, a small bark, that the eye of a sailor alone could recognize as a Genoese tartane. She was coming out of Marseilles harbor, and was standing out to sea rapidly, her sharp prow cleaving through the waves.

"Oh!" cried Edmond, "to think that in half an hour I could join her, did I not fear being questioned, detected, and conveyed back to Marseilles

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"*He rose on the waves, making signs of distress.*"

Photo-Etching — From Drawing by Frank T. Merrill.

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What can I do? What story can I invent? Under pretext of trading along the coast, these men, who are in reality smugglers, will prefer selling me to doing a good action. I must wait. But I cannot, I am starving. In a few hours my strength will be utterly exhausted: besides, perhaps, I have not been missed at the fortress. I can pass as one of the sailors wrecked last night. This story will pass current, for there is no one left to contradict me."

As he spoke, Dantes looked towards the spot where the fishing vessel had been wrecked, and started. The red cap of one of the sailors hung to a point of the rock; and some beams that had formed a part of the vessel's keel floated at the foot of the crags.

In an instant Dantes' plan was formed. He swam to the cap, placed it on his head, seized one of the beams, and struck out so as to cross the line the vessel was taking.

"I am saved," murmured he.

And this conviction restored his strength.

He soon perceived the vessel, which, having the wind right ahead, was tacking between the Chateau d'If and the tower of Planier. For an instant he feared lest the bark, instead of keeping in shore, should stand out to sea; but he soon saw by her manœuvres that she wished to pass, like most vessels bound for Italy, between the islands of Jaros and Calaseraigne. However, the vessel and the swimmer insensibly neared one another; and in one of its tacks the bark approached within a quarter of a mile of him. He rose on the waves, making signs of distress, but no one on board perceived him; and the vessel stood on another tack. Dantes would have cried out, but he reflected that the wind would drown his voice.

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It was then he rejoiced at his precaution in taking the beam, for without it he would have been unable, perhaps, to reach the vessel—certainly to return to shore, should he be unsuccessful in attracting attention.

Dantes, although almost sure as to what course the bark would take, had yet watched it anxiously until it tacked and stood towards him. Then he advanced; but, before they had met, the vessel again changed her direction. By a violent effort, he rose half out of the water, waving his cap, and uttering a loud shout peculiar to sailors.

This time he was both seen and heard, and the tartane steered instantly towards him. At the same time, he saw they were about to lower the boat. An instant after, the boat, rowed by two men, advanced rapidly towards him. Dantes abandoned the beam, which he thought now useless, and swam vigorously to meet them. But he had reckoned too much upon his strength, and then he felt how serviceable the beam had been to him. His arms grew stiff, his legs had lost their flexibility, and he was almost breathless.

He uttered a second cry. The two sailors redoubled their efforts, and one of them cried in Italian, "Courage!"

The word reached his ear as a wave, which he no longer had the strength to surmount, passed over his head. He rose again to the surface, supporting himself by one of those desperate efforts a drowning man makes, uttered a third cry, and felt himself sink again, as if the fatal bullet were again tied to his feet.

The water passed over his head and the sky seemed livid. A violent effort again brought him to the surface. He felt as if something seized him by the hair; but he saw and heard nothing. He had fainted.

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When he opened his eyes Dantes found himself on the deck of the tartane. His first care was to see what direction they were pursuing. They were rapidly leaving the Chateau d'If behind. Dantes was so exhausted that the exclamation of joy he uttered was taken for a sigh.

As we have said, he was lying on the deck, a sailor was rubbing his limbs with a woollen cloth; another, whom he recognized as the one who had cried out "Courage!" held a gourd full of rum to his mouth; whilst the third, an old sailor, at once the pilot and captain, looked on with that egotistical pity men feel for a misfortune that they have escaped yesterday and which may overtake them to-morrow.

A few drops of the rum restored suspended animation, whilst the friction of his limbs restored their elasticity.

"Who are you?" said the pilot, in bad French.

"I am," replied Dantes, in bad Italian, "a Maltese sailor. We were coming from Syracuse laden with grain. The storm of last night overtook us at Cape Morigon, and we were wrecked on these rocks."

"Where do you come from?"

"From these rocks, that I had the good luck to cling to whilst our captain and the rest of the crew were all lost. I saw your ship, and fearful of being left to perish on the desolate island, I swam off on a fragment of the vessel in order to try and gain your bark. You have saved my life, and I thank you," continued Dantes. "I was lost when one of your sailors caught hold of my hair."

"It was I," said a sailor, of a frank and manly appearance; "and it was time, for you were sinking."

"Yes," returned Dantes, holding out his hand, "I thank you again."

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"I almost hesitated though," replied the sailor; "you looked more like a brigand than an honest man, with your beard six inches and your hair a foot long."

Dantes recollected that his hair and beard had not been cut all the time he was at the Chateau d'If.

"Yes," said he, "I made a vow to our Lady of the Grotto not to cut my hair or beard for ten years if I were saved in a moment of danger; but to-day the vow expires."

"Now, what are we to do with you?" said the captain.

"Alas! anything you please. My captain is dead; I have barely escaped; but I am a good sailor. Leave me at the first port you make; I shall be sure to find employment."

"Do you know the Mediterranean?"

"I have sailed over it since my childhood."

"You know the best harbors?"

"There are few ports that I could not enter or leave with my eyes blinded."

"I say, captain," said the sailor who had cried "Courage!" to Dantes, "if what he says is true, what hinders his staying with us?"

"If he says true," said the captain, doubtingly. "But in his present condition he will promise anything, and take his chance of keeping it afterwards."

"I will do more than I promise," said Dantes.

"We shall see," returned the other, smiling.

"Where are you going to?" asked Dantes.

"To Leghorn."

"Then why, instead of tacking so frequently, do you not sail nearer to the wind?"

"Because we should run straight on to the Island of Rion."

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"You shall pass it by twenty fathoms."

"Take the helm, and let us see what you know."

The young man took the helm, ascertaining by a slight pressure if the vessel answered the rudder, and seeing that, without being a first-rate sailer, she yet was tolerably obedient.

"To the braces," said he.

The four seamen who composed the crew obeyed, whilst the pilot looked on.

"Haul taut."

They obeyed.

"Belay."

This order was also executed, and the vessel passed, as Dantes had predicted, twenty fathoms to the right.

"Bravo!" said the captain.

"Bravo!" repeated the sailors.

And they all regarded with astonishment this man, whose eye had recovered an intelligence and his body a vigor they were far from suspecting.

"You see," said Dantes, quitting the helm, "I shall be of some use to you, at least, during the voyage. If you do not want me at Leghorn, you can leave me there, and I will pay you out of the first wages I get for my food and the clothes you lend me."

"Ah," said the captain, "we can agree very well if you are reasonable."

"Give me what you give the others, and all will be arranged," returned Dantes.

"That's not fair," said the seaman who had saved Dantes, "for you know more than we do."

"What is that to you, Jacopo?" returned the captain. "Every one is free to ask what he pleases."

"That's true," replied Jacopo. "I only made a remark."

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"Well, you would do much better to lend him a jacket and a pair of trousers, if you have them."

"No," said Jacopo; "but I have a shirt and a pair of trousers."

"That is all I want," interrupted Dantes.

Jacopo dived into the hold, and soon returned with what Edmond wanted.

"Now, then, do you wish for anything else?" said the patron.

"A piece of bread and another glass of the capital rum I tasted, for I have not eaten or drunk for a long time."

He had not tasted food for forty hours.

A piece of bread was brought, and Jacopo offered him the gourd.

"Larboard your helm," cried the captain to the steersman.

Dantes glanced to the same side as he lifted the gourd to his mouth; but his hand stopped.

"Halloa! what's the matter at the Chateau d'If?" said the captain.

A small white cloud, which had attracted Dantes' attention, crowned the summit of the bastion of the Chateau d'If.

At the same moment the faint report of a gun was heard. The sailors looked at one another.

"What is this?" asked the captain.

"A prisoner has escaped from the Chateau d'If, and they are firing the alarm gun," replied Dantes.

The captain glanced at him, but he had lifted the rum to his lips, and was drinking it with so much composure that his suspicions, if he had any, died away.

"At any rate," murmured he, "if it be, so much the better, for I have made a rare acquisition."

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Under pretence of being fatigued, Dantes asked to take the helm; the steersman, enchanted to be relieved, looked at the captain, and the latter by a sign indicated that he might abandon it to his new comrade. Dantes could thus keep his eyes on Marseilles.

"What is the day of the month?" asked he of Jacopo, who sat down beside him.

"The 28th of February!"

"In what year?"

"In what year—you ask me in what year?"

"Yes," replied the young man, "I ask you in what year!"

"Have you forgotten, then?"

"I have been so frightened last night," replied Dantes, smiling, "that I have almost lost my memory. I asked you what year is it?"

"The year 1829," returned Jacopo.

It was fourteen years, day for day, since Dantes' arrest.

He was nineteen when he entered the Chateau d'If; he was thirty-three when he escaped.

A sorrowful smile passed over his face; he asked himself what had become of Mercedes, who must believe him dead.

Then his eyes lighted up with hatred as he thought of the three men who had caused him so long and wretched a captivity.

He renewed against Danglars, Fernand, and Villefort the oath of implacable vengeance he had made in his dungeon.

This oath was no longer a vain menace, for the fastest sailer in the Mediterranean would have been unable to overtake the little tartane, that with every stitch of canvas set was flying before the wind to Leghorn.

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE SMUGGLERS.

DANTES had not been a day on board before he had an insight into the persons with whom he sailed. Without having been in the school of the Abbe Faria, the worthy master of "La Jeune Amelie" (the name of the Genoese tartane) knew a smattering of all the tongues spoken on the shores of that large lake called the Mediterranean, from the Arabic to the Provençal; and this, whilst it spared him interpreters, persons always troublesome and frequently indiscreet, gave him great facilities of communication, either with the vessels he met at sea, with the small barks sailing along the coast, or with those persons without name, country, or apparent calling, who are always seen on the quays of seaports, and who live by those hidden and mysterious means which we must suppose come in a right line from Providence, as they have no visible means of existence. We may thus suppose that Dantes was on board a smuggling lugger.

In the first instance the master had received Dantes on board with a certain degree of distrust. He was very well known to the custom-house officers of the coast, and as there was between these worthies and himself an exchange of the most cunning stratagems, he had at first thought that Dantes might be an emis-

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sary of these illustrious executors of rights and duties, who employed this ingenious means of penetrating some of the secrets of his trade. But the skilful manner in which Dantes had manœuvred the little bark had entirely reassured him, and then when he saw the light smoke floating like a plume above the bastion of the Chateau d'If, and heard the distant explosion, he was instantly struck with the idea that he had on board his vessel one for whom, like the goings in and comings out of kings, they accord salutes of cannons. This made him less uneasy, it must be owned, than if the new-comer had proved a custom-house officer, but this latter supposition also disappeared like the first, when he beheld the perfect tranquillity of his recruit.

Edmond thus had the advantage of knowing what the owner was, without the owner knowing who he was; and, however the old sailor and his crew tried to "pump" him, they extracted nothing more from him; giving accurate descriptions of Naples and Malta, which he knew as well as Marseilles, and persisting stoutly in his first statement. Thus the Genoese, subtile as he was, was duped by Edmond, in whose favor his mild demeanor, his nautical skill, and his admirable dissimulation pleaded. Moreover, it is possible that the Genoese was one of those shrewd persons who know nothing but what they should know, and believe nothing but what they should believe.

It was thus, in this reciprocal position, that they reached Leghorn.

Here Edmond was to undergo another trial; it was to see if he should recognize himself, never having beheld his own features for fourteen years. He had preserved a tolerably good remembrance of what the youth had been, and was now to find what the man had

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become. His comrades believed that his vow was fulfilled, as he had twenty times touched at Leghorn before he remembered a barber in the Rue Saint-Ferdinand; he went there to have his beard and hair cut.

The barber gazed in amaze at this man with the long hair and beard, thick and black as it was, and resembling one of Titian's glorious heads. At this period it was not the fashion to wear so large a beard and hair so long; now a barber would only be surprised if a man gifted with such advantages should consent voluntarily to deprive himself of them. The Leghorn barber went to work without a single observation.

When the operation was concluded, when Edmond felt his chin was completely smooth, and his hair reduced to its usual length, he requested a looking-glass in which he might see himself. He was now, as we have said, three-and-thirty years of age, and his fourteen years' imprisonment had produced a great moral change in his appearance.

Dantes had entered the Chateau d'If with the round, open, smiling face of a young and happy man, with whom the early paths of life have been smooth and who relies on the future as a natural deduction of the past. This was now all changed.

His oval face was lengthened; his smiling mouth had assumed the firm and marked lines which betoken resolution; his eyebrows were arched beneath a large and thoughtful wrinkle; his eyes were full of melancholy, and from their depths occasionally sparkled gloomy fires of misanthropy and hatred; his complexion, so long kept from the sun, had now that pale color which produces, when the features are encircled with black hair, the aristocratic beauty of the men of the north. The deep learning he had acquired had, besides,

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diffused over his features the rays of extreme intellect; and he had also acquired, although previously a tall man, that vigor which a frame possesses which has so long concentrated all its force within itself.

To the elegance of a nervous and slight form had succeeded the solidity of a rounded and muscular figure. As to his voice, prayers, sobs, and imprecations had changed it now into a soft and singularly touching tone, and now into a sound rude and almost hoarse. Moreover, being perpetually in twilight or darkness, his eyes had acquired that singular faculty of distinguishing objects in the night common to the hyena and the wolf.

Edmond smiled when he beheld himself; it was impossible that his best friend—if, indeed, he had any friend left—could recognize him; he could not recognize himself.

The master of "La Jeune Amelie," who was very desirous of retaining amongst his crew a man of Edmond's value, had offered to him some advances out of his future profits, which Edmond had accepted. His next care on leaving the barber's, who had achieved his first metamorphosis, was to enter a shop and buy a complete sailor's suit—a garb, as we all know, very simple, and consisting of white trousers, a striped shirt, and a cap.

It was in this costume, and bringing back to Jacopo the shirt and trousers he had lent him, that Edmond reappeared before the patron of "La Jeune Amelie," who made him tell his story over and over again before he could believe him, or recognize in the neat and trim sailor the man with thick and matted beard, his hair tangled with seaweed, and his body soaking in sea-brine, whom he had picked up naked and nearly drowned.

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Attracted by his prepossessing appearance, he renewed his offers of an engagement to Dantes; but Dantes, who had his own projects, would not agree for a longer time than three months.

"La Jeune Amelie" had a very active crew, very obedient to their captain, who lost as little time as possible. He had scarcely been a week at Leghorn before the hold of his vessel was filled with painted muslins, prohibited cottons, English powder, and tobacco on which the crown had forgotten to put its mark. The master was to get all this out of Leghorn free of duties, and land it on the shores of Corsica, where certain speculators undertook to forward the cargo to France.

They sailed; Edmond was again cleaving the azure sea which had been the first horizon of his youth, and which he had so often dreamed of in prison. He left Gorgone on his right and La Pianosa on his left, and went towards the country of Paoli and Napoleon.

The next morning, going on deck, which he always did at an early hour, the patron found Dantes leaning against the bulwarks gazing with intense earnestness at a pile of granite rocks, which the rising sun tinged with rosy light. It was the Isle of Monte-Cristo.

"La Jeune Amelie" left it three quarters of a league to the larboard, and kept on for Corsica.

Dantes thought, as they passed thus closely the island whose name was so interesting to him, that he had only to leap into the sea and in half an hour he would be on the promised land. But then what could he do without instruments to discover his treasure, without arms to defend himself? Besides, what would the sailors say? What would the patron think? He must wait.

Fortunately, Dantes had learned how to wait; he had waited fourteen years for his liberty, and now he was

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free, he could wait at least six months or a year for wealth.

Would he not have accepted liberty without riches, if it had been offered to him?

Besides, were not these riches chimerical?—offspring of the brain of the poor Abbe Faria. Had they not died with him?

It is true this letter of the Cardinal Spada was singularly circumstantial, and Dantes repeated to himself, from one end to the other, the letter of which he had not forgotten a word.

The evening came on, and Edmond saw the island covered with every tint that twilight brings with it, and disappear in the darkness from all eyes; but he, with his gaze accustomed to the gloom of a prison, continued to see it after all the others, for he remained last upon deck.

The next morning broke off the coast of Aleria; all day they coasted, and in the evening saw the fires lighted on land; when they were extinguished, they no doubt recognized the signals for landing, for a ship's lantern was hung up at the mast-head instead of the streamer, and they neared the shore within gunshot.

Dantes remarked that at this time, too, the patron of "La Jeune Amelie" had, as he neared the land, mounted two small culverines, which without making much noise, can throw a ball of four to the pound a thousand paces or so.

But on this occasion the precaution was superfluous, and everything proceeded with the utmost smoothness and politeness. Four shallops came off with very little noise alongside the bark, which, no doubt in acknowledgment of the compliment, lowered her own shallop into the sea, and the five boats worked so well that

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by two o'clock in the morning all the cargo was out of "La Jeune Amelie" and on *terra firma*.

The same night, such a man of regularity was the patron of "La Jeune Amelie," the profits were shared out, and each man had a hundred Tuscan livres, or about three guineas English.

But the voyage was not ended. They turned the bowsprit towards Sardinia, where they intended to take in a cargo, which was to replace what had been discharged.

The second operation was as successful as the first. "La Jeune Amelie" was in luck.

This new cargo was destined for the coast of the Duchy of Lucca, and consisted almost entirely of Havana cigars, sherry, and Malaga wines.

There they had a bit of a skirmish in getting rid of the duties; the *gabelle* was in truth the everlasting enemy of the patron of "La Jeune Amelie." A custom-house officer was laid low, and two sailors were wounded; Dantes was one of the latter, a ball having touched him in the left shoulder.

Dantes was almost glad of this affray, and almost pleased at being wounded; for they were rude lessons, which taught him with what eye he could view danger, and with what endurance he could bear suffering. He had contemplated danger with a smile, and when wounded had exclaimed with the great philosopher, "Pain, thou art not an evil."

He had, moreover, looked upon the custom-house officer wounded to death; and, whether from heat of blood produced by the rencounter, or the chill of human sentiment, this sight had made but slight impression upon him; Dantes was on the way he desired to follow, and was moving towards the end he wished to achieve; his heart was in a fair way of petrifying in his bosom.

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Jacopo, seeing him fall, had believed him killed, and rushing towards him raised him up, and then attended to him with all the kindness of an attached comrade.

This world was not then so good as Voltaire's Doctor Pangloss believed it, neither was it so wicked as Dantes thought it, since this man, who had nothing to expect from his comrade but the inheritance of his share of the prize-money, testified so much sorrow when he saw him fall.

Fortunately, as we have said, Edmond was only wounded, and with certain herbs gathered at certain seasons and sold to the smugglers by the old Sardinian women, the wound soon closed. Edmond then resolved to try Jacopo, and offered him in return for his attention a share of his prize-money, but Jacopo refused it indignantly.

It resulted, therefore, from this kind of sympathetic devotion which Jacopo had bestowed on Edmond from the first time he saw him, that Edmond felt for Jacopo a certain degree of affection. But this sufficed for Jacopo, who already instinctively felt that Edmond had a right to superiority of position—a superiority which Edmond had concealed from all others. And from this time the kindness which Edmond showed him was enough for the brave seaman.

Then in the long days on board ship, when the vessel, gliding on with security over the azure sea, required nothing, thanks to the favorable wind that swelled her sails, but the helmsman, Edmond, with a chart in his hand, became the instructor of Jacopo, as the poor Abbe Faria had been his tutor. He pointed out to him the bearings of the coast, explained to him the variations of the compass, and taught him to read in that vast book opened over our heads which they call heaven, and

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where God writes in azure with letters of diamonds. And when Jacopo inquired of him, "What is the use of teaching all these things to a poor sailor like me?" Edmond replied:

"Who knows? you may one day be the captain of a vessel; your fellow-countryman, Bonaparte, became Emperor."

We had forgotten to say that Jacopo was a Corsican.

Two months and a half elapsed in these trips, and Edmond had become as skilful a coaster as he had been a hardy seaman; he had formed an acquaintance with all the smugglers on the coast, and learned all the masonic signs by which these half-pirates recognize each other. He had passed and repassed this Isle of Monte-Cristo twenty times, but not once had he found an opportunity of landing there.

He then formed a resolution. This was, as soon as his engagement with the patron of "La Jeune Amelie" ended, he would hire a small bark on his own account (for in his several voyages he had amassed a hundred piastres), and under some pretext land at the Isle of Monte-Cristo.

Then he would be free to make his researches, not, perhaps, entirely at liberty, for he would be doubtless watched by those who accompanied him. But in this world we must risk something.

Prison had made Edmond prudent, and he was desirous of running no risk whatever.

But in vain did he rack his imagination; fertile as it was, he could not devise any plan for reaching the wished-for isle without being accompanied thither.

Dantes was tossed about on these doubts and wishes, when the patron, who had great confidence in him, and was very desirous of retaining him in his service, took

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him by the arm one evening and led him to a tavern on the Via del'Oglio, where the leading smugglers of Leghorn used to congregate.

It was here they discussed the affairs of the coast. Already Dantes had visited this maritime Bourse two or three times, and seeing all these hardy free-traders, who supplied the whole coast for nearly two hundred leagues in extent, he had asked himself what power might not that man attain who should give the impulse of his will to all these contrary and diverging links.

This time it was a great matter that was under discussion, connected with a vessel laden with Turkey carpets, stuffs of the Levant, and cashmeres. It was requisite to find some neutral ground on which an exchange could be made, and then to try and land these goods on the coast of France.

If successful, the profit would be enormous, there would be a gain of fifty or sixty piastres each for the crew.

The patron of "La Jeune Amelie" proposed as a place of landing the isle of Monte-Cristo, which being completely deserted, and having neither soldiers nor revenue officers, seemed to have been placed in the midst of the ocean since the time of the heathen Olympus by Mercury, the god of merchants and robbers, classes which we in modern times have separated, if not made distinct, but which antiquity appears to have included in the same category.

At the mention of Monte-Cristo, Dantes started with joy; he rose to conceal his emotion, and took a turn round the smoky tavern, where all the languages of the known world were jumbled in a *lingua franca*. When he again joined the two persons who had been discussing,

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it had been decided that they should touch at Monte-Cristo, and set out on the following night.

Edmond, being consulted, was of opinion that the island offered every possible security, and that great enterprises, to be well done, should be done quickly. Nothing then was altered in the plan arranged, and orders were given to get under way next night, and, wind and weather permitting, to gain, the day after, the waters of the neutral isle.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ISLE OF MONTE-CRISTO.

THUS at length, by one of those pieces of unlooked-for good fortune which sometimes occur to those on whom misfortune has for a long time spent itself, Dantes was about to arrive at his wished-for opportunity by simple and natural means, and land in the island without incurring any suspicion. One night only separated him from his departure so ardently wished for.

This night was one of the most feverish that Dantes had ever passed, and during its progress all the charms, good and evil, passed through his brain.

If he closed his eyes, he saw the letters of Cardinal Spada written on the wall in characters of flame; if he slept for a moment, the wildest dreams haunted his brain. He descended into grottoes paved with emeralds, with panels of rubies, and the roof glowing with diamond stalactites. Pearls fell drop by drop as subterranean waters filter in their caves. Edmond, amazed, wonderstruck, filled his pockets with the radiant gems and then returned to daylight, when he discovered that his prizes were all converted into common pebbles. He then endeavored to re-enter the marvellous grottoes, but then beheld them only in the distance; and now the way serpentined into countless paths, and then the entrance became invisible, and in vain did he tax his memory for

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the magic and mysterious words which opened the splendid caverns of Ali Baba to the Arabian fisherman. All was useless; the treasure disappeared, and had again reverted to the genii from whom for a moment he had hoped to carry it off.

The day came at length, and was almost as feverish as the night had been, but it brought reason to aid his imagination, and Dantes was then enabled to arrange a plan which had hitherto been vague and unsettled in his brain.

Night came, and with it the preparation for departure, and these preparations served to conceal Dantes' agitation. He had by degrees assumed such authority over his companions that he was almost like a commander on board; and as his orders were always clear, distinct, and easy of execution, his comrades obeyed him with celerity and pleasure.

The old patron did not interfere, for he, too, had recognized the superiority of Dantes over the crew and himself. He saw in the young man his natural successor, and regretted that he had not a daughter that he might have bound Edmond to him by a distinguished alliance.

At seven o'clock in the evening all was ready, and at ten minutes past seven they doubled the light-house just as the beacon was kindled.

The sea was calm, and with a fresh breeze from the southeast they sailed beneath a bright blue sky, in which God also lighted up in turn his beacon lights, each of which is a world. Dantes told them that all hands might turn in and he would take the helm.

When the Maltese (for so they called Dantes) had said this, it was sufficient, and all went to their cots contentedly. This frequently happened. Dantes, rejected by all the world, frequently experienced a desire for solitude;

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and what solitude is at the same time more complete, more poetical, than that of a bark floating isolated on the sea during the obscurity of the night, in the silence of immensity, and under the eye of heaven?

Now this solitude was peopled with his thoughts, and the night lighted up by his illusions, and the silence animated by his anticipations. When the patron awoke the vessel was hurrying on with every sail set, and every sail full with the breeze. They were making nearly ten knots an hour.

The Isle of Monte-Cristo loomed large in the horizon.

Edmond resigned the bark to the master's care and went and lay down in his hammock, but in spite of a sleepless night he could not close his eyes for a moment.

Two hours afterwards he came on deck as the boat was about to double the Isle of Elba. They were just abreast of Mareciana, and beyond the flat but verdant island of La Pianosa. The peak of Monte-Cristo, reddened by the burning sun, was seen against the azure sky.

Dantes desired the helmsman to put down his helm in order to leave La Pianosa on the right hand, as he knew that he should thus decrease the distance by two or three knots.

About five o'clock in the evening the island was quite distinct, and everything on it was plainly perceptible, owing to that clearness of the atmosphere which is peculiar to the light which the rays of the sun cast at its setting.

Edmond gazed most earnestly at the mass of rocks, which gave out all the variety of twilight colors, from the brightest pink to the deepest blue, and from time to time his cheeks flushed, his brow became purple, and a mist passed over his eyes.

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Never did gamester, whose whole fortune is staked on one cast of the die, experience the anguish which Edmond felt in his paroxysms of hope. Night came, and at ten o'clock P. M. they anchored. "La Jeune Amelie" was the first at the rendezvous.

In spite of his usual command over himself, Dantes could not restrain his impetuosity. He was the first who jumped on shore, and had he dared he would, like Lucius Brutus, have "kissed his mother Earth." It was dark, but at eleven o'clock the moon rose in the midst of the ocean, whose every wave she silvered, and then, "ascending high," played in floods of pale light on the rocky hills of this second Pelion.

The island was familiar to the crew of "La Jeune Amelie;" it was one of her halting places. As to Dantes, he had passed it on each of his voyages to and from the Levant, but never touched at it.

He questioned Jacopo. "Where shall we pass the night?" he inquired.

"Why, on board the tartane," replied the sailor.

"Should we not be better in the grottoes?"

"What grottoes?"

"Why, the grottoes—caves of the island."

"I do not know of any grottoes," replied Jacopo.

A cold damp sprang to Dantes' brow.

"What! are there no grottoes at Monte-Cristo?" he asked.

"None."

For a moment Dantes was speechless; then he remembered that these caves might have been filled up by some accident, or even stopped up for the sake of greater security by Cardinal Spada.

The point was, then, to discover the last opening. It was useless to search at night, and Dantes therefore de-

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layed all investigation until the morning. Besides, a signal made half a league out at sea, and to which "La Jeune Amelie" also replied by a similar signal, indicated that the moment was arrived for business.

The boat that now arrived, assured by the answering signal that all was right, soon came in sight, white and silent as a phantom, and cast anchor within a cable's length of shore.

Then the landing began. Dantes reflected, as he worked, on the shout of joy which, with a single word, he could produce from amongst these men, if he gave utterance to the one unchanging thought that pervaded his heart. But, far from disclosing this precious secret, he almost feared that he had already said too much, and, by his restlessness and continual questions, his minute observations and evident preoccupation, had aroused suspicions. Fortunately, as regarded this circumstance, at least, with him the painful past reflected on his countenance an indelible sadness, and the glimmerings of gayety seen beneath this cloud were indeed but transitory.

No one had the slightest suspicion; and when, next day, taking a fowling-piece, powder and shot, Dantes testified a desire to go and kill some of the wild goats that were seen springing from rock to rock, his wish was construed into a love of sport or a desire for solitude. However, Jacopo insisted on following him, and Dantes did not oppose this, fearing if he did so that he might incur distrust. Scarcely, however, had he gone a quarter of a league than, having killed a kid, he begged Jacopo to take it to his comrades and request them to cook it, and when ready to let him know by firing a gun. This, and some dried fruits, and a flask of wine of Monte Pulciano, was the bill of fare.

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Dantes went forwards, looking behind and round about him from time to time. Having reached the summit of a rock, he saw, a thousand feet beneath him, his companions, whom Jacopo had rejoined, and who were all busy preparing the repast which Edmond's skill as a marksman had augmented with a capital dish.

Edmond looked at them for a moment with the sad and soft smile of a man superior to his fellows.

"In two hours' time," said he, "these persons will depart richer by fifty piastres each, to go and risk their lives again by endeavoring to gain fifty more such pieces. Then they will return with a fortune of six hundred francs, and waste this treasure in some city with the pride of sultans and the insolence of nabobs. At this moment Hope makes me despise their riches, which seem to me contemptible. Yet, perchance, to-morrow deception will so act on me that I shall, on compulsion, consider such a contemptible possession as the utmost happiness. Oh, no!" exclaimed Edmond, "that will not be. The wise, unerring Faria could not be mistaken in this one thing. Besides, it were better to die than continue to lead this low and wretched life."

Thus Dantes, who but three months before had no desire but liberty, had now not liberty enough, and panted for wealth. The cause was not in Dantes, but in Providence, who, whilst limiting the power of a man, has filled him with boundless desires.

Meanwhile, by a way between two walls of rock, following a path worn by a torrent, and which, in all human probability, human foot had never before trod, Dantes approached the spot where he supposed the grottoes must have existed. Keeping along the coast and examining the smallest objects with serious attention, he

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thought he could trace on certain rocks marks made by the hand of man.

Time, which encrusts all physical substance with its mossy mantle, as it invests all things moral with its mantle of forgetfulness, seemed to have respected these signs, traced with a certain regularity, and probably with the design of leaving traces. Occasionally these marks disappeared beneath tufts of myrtle, which spread into large bushes laden with blossoms or beneath parasitical lichen. It was thus requisite that Edmond should move branches on one side or remove the mosses in order to retrace the indicating marks which were to be his guides in this labyrinth. These signs had renewed the best hopes in Edmond's mind. Why should it not have been the cardinal who had first traced them, in order that they might, in the event of a catastrophe, which he could not foresee would have been so complete, serve as a guide for his nephew? This solitary place was precisely suited for a man desirous of burying a treasure. Only, might not these betraying marks have attracted other eyes than those for whom they were made? and had the dark and wondrous isle indeed faithfully guarded its precious secret?

It seemed, however, to Edmond, who was hidden from his comrades by the inequalities of the ground, that at sixty paces from the harbor the marks ceased; nor did they terminate at any grotto. A large round rock, placed solidly on its base, was the only spot to which they seemed to lead. Edmond reflected that perhaps instead of having reached the end, he might have only touched on the beginning, and he therefore turned round and retraced his steps.

During this time his comrades had prepared the repast, had got some water from a spring, spread out the

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fruit and bread, and cooked the kid. Just at the moment when they were taking the dainty animal from the spit they saw Edmond, who, light and daring as a chamois, was springing from rock to rock, and they fired the signal agreed upon. The sportsman instantly changed his direction, and ran quickly towards them. But at the moment when they were all following with their eyes his agile bounds with a rashness which gave them alarm, Edmond's foot slipped, and they saw him stagger on the edge of a rock and disappear. They all rushed towards him, for all loved Edmond in spite of his superiority; yet Jacopo reached him first.

He found Edmond stretched bleeding and almost senseless. He had rolled down a height of twelve or fifteen feet. They poured some drops of rum down his throat, and this remedy, which had before been so beneficial to him, produced the same effect as formerly. Edmond opened his eyes, complained of a great pain in his knee, a feeling of heaviness in his head, and severe pains in his loins. They wished to carry him to the shore, but when they touched him, although under Jacopo's directions, he declared, with heavy groans, that he could not bear to be moved.

It may be supposed that Dantes did not think of his dinner; but he insisted that his comrades, who had not his reasons for fasting, should have their meal. As for himself, he declared that he had only need of a little rest, and that when they returned he should be easier. The sailors did not require much urging. They were hungry, and the smell of the roasted kid was very savory, and your tars are not very ceremonious. An hour afterwards they returned. All that Edmond had been able to do was to drag himself about a dozen paces forward to lean against a moss-grown rock.

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But, far from being easier, Dantes' pains had appeared to increase in violence. The old patron, who was obliged to sail in the morning in order to land his cargo on the frontiers of Piedmont and France, between Nice and Frejus, urged Dantes to try and rise. Edmond made great exertions in order to comply; but at each effort he fell back, moaning and turning pale.

"He has broken his ribs," said the commander, in a low voice. "No matter; he is an excellent fellow, and we must not leave him. We will try and carry him on board the tartane."

Dantes declared, however, that he would rather die where he was than undergo the agony caused by the slightest movement he made.

"Well," said the patron, "let what may happen, it shall never be said that we deserted a good comrade like you. We will not go till evening."

This very much astonished the sailors, although not one opposed it. The patron was so strict that this was the first time they had ever seen him give up an enterprise, or even delay an arrangement.

Dantes would not allow any such infraction of regular and proper rules should be made in his favor.

"No, no," he said to the patron, "I was awkward, and it is just that I pay the penalty of my clumsiness. Leave me a small supply of biscuit, a gun, powder, and balls, to kill the kids or defend myself at need, and a pickaxe, to build me something like a shed if you delay in coming back for me."

"But you'll die of hunger," said the patron.

"I would rather do so," was Edmond's reply, "than suffer the inexpressible agonies which the slightest motion brings on."

The patron turned towards his vessel, which was

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undulating in the small harbor, and, with her sails partly set, was ready for sea when all her toilet should be completed.

"What are we to do, Maltese?" asked the captain. "We cannot leave you here so, and yet we cannot stay."

"Go, go!" exclaimed Dantes.

"We shall be absent about a week," said the patron, "and then we must run out of course to come here and take you up again."

"Why," said Dantes, "if in two or three days you hail any fishing-boat, desire them to come here to me. I will pay twenty-five piastres for my passage back to Leghorn. If you do not come across one, return for me."

The patron shook his head.

"Listen, Captain Baldi; there's one way of settling this," said Jacopo. "Do you go, and I will stay and take care of the wounded man."

"And give up your share of the venture," said Edmond, "to remain with me?"

"Yes," said Jacopo, "and without any hesitation."

"You are a good fellow and a kind-hearted messmate," replied Edmond, "and Heaven will recompense you for your generous intentions; but I do not wish any one to stay with me. A day or two's rest will set me up, and I hope I shall find among the rocks certain herbs most excellent for contusions."

A singular smile passed over Dantes' lips; he squeezed Jacopo's hand warmly; but nothing could shake his determination to remain—and remain alone.

The smugglers left with Edmond what he had requested, and set sail; but not without turning about several times, and each time making signs of a cordial

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leave-taking, to which Edmond replied with his hand only, as if he could not move the rest of his body.

Then, when they had disappeared, he said, with a smile:

"'Tis strange that it should be amongst such men that we find proofs of friendship and devotion."

Then he dragged himself cautiously to the top of a rock, from which he had a full view of the sea, and thence he saw the tartane complete her preparations for sailing, weigh anchor, and, balancing herself as gracefully as a water-fowl ere it takes to the wing, set sail. At the end of an hour she was completely out of sight; at least it was impossible for the wounded man to see her any longer from the spot where he was.

Then Dantes arose more agile and light than the kid amongst the myrtles and shrubs of these wild rocks, took his gun in one hand, his pickaxe in the other, and hastened towards the rock on which the marks he had noted terminated.

"And now," he exclaimed, remembering the tale of the Arabian fisherman, which Faria had related to him —"now open sesame."

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CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SECRET CAVE.

THE sun had nearly reached the meridian, and his scorching rays fell full on the rocks, which seemed themselves sensible of the heat. Thousands of grasshoppers, hidden in the bushes, chirped with a monotonous and dull note; the leaves of the myrtle and olive-trees waved and rustled in the wind. At every step that Edmond took he disturbed the lizards glittering with the hues of the emerald; afar off he saw the wild goats bounding from crag to crag. In a word, the isle was inhabited, yet Edmond felt himself alone, guided by the hand of God. He felt an indescribable sensation somewhat akin to dread—that dread of the daylight which even in the desert makes us fear that we are watched and observed.

This feeling was so strong, that at the moment when Edmond was about to commence his labor, he stopped, laid down his pickaxe, seized his gun, mounted to the summit of the highest rock, and from thence gazed round in every direction.

But it was not upon Corsica, the very houses of which he could distinguish; nor on Sardinia; nor on the Isle of Elba, with its historical associations; nor upon the almost imperceptible line that to the experienced eye of a sailor alone revealed the coast of Genoa, the proud,

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and Leghorn, the commercial, that he gazed. It was at the brigantine that had left in the morning, and the tartane that had just set sail, that Edmond fixed his eyes. The first was just disappearing in the Straits of Bonifacio; the other, following an opposite direction, was about to round the Island of Corsica. This sight reassured him. He then looked at the objects near him. He saw himself on the highest point of the isle, a statue on this vast pedestal of granite, nothing human appearing in sight, whilst the blue ocean beat against the base of the island, and covered it with a fringe of foam. Then he descended with cautious and slow step, for he dreaded lest an accident similar to that he had so adroitly feigned should happen in reality.

Dantes, as we have said, had traced back the marks in the rocks; and he had noticed that they led to a small creek, hidden like the bath of some ancient nymph. This creek was sufficiently wide at its mouth, and deep in its centre, to admit of the entrance of a small vessel of the speronare class; which would be perfectly concealed from observation.

Then following the clue that in the hands of the Abbe Faria had been so skilfully used to guide him through the Dædalian labyrinth of probabilities, he thought that the Cardinal Spada, anxious not to be watched, had entered the creek, concealed his little bark, followed the line marked by the notches in the rock, and at the end of it had buried his treasure. It was this idea that had brought Dantes back to the circular rock. One thing only perplexed Edmond, and destroyed his theory. How could this rock, which weighed several tons, have been lifted to this spot without the aid of many men? Suddenly an idea flashed across his mind. Instead of raising it, thought he, they have lowered it. And he

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sprang from the rock in order to inspect the base on which it had formerly stood.

He soon perceived that a slope had been formed; and the rock had slid along this until it stopped at the spot it now occupied. A large stone had served as a wedge; flints and pebbles had been inserted around it, so as to conceal the orifice; this species of masonry had been covered with earth, and grass and weeds had grown there; moss had clung to the stones, myrtle bushes had taken root, and the old rock seemed fixed to the earth.

Dantes raised the earth carefully, and detected, or fancied he detected, the ingenious artifice. He attacked this wall, cemented by the hand of time, with his pick-axe. After ten minutes' labor the wall gave way, and a hole large enough to insert the arm was opened. Dantes went and cut the strongest olive-tree he could find, stripped off its branches, inserted it in the hole, and used it as a lever. But the rock was too heavy, and too firmly wedged, to be moved by any one man, were he Hercules himself. Dantes reflected that he must attack this wedge. But how? He cast his eyes around and saw the horn full of powder, which his friend Jacopo had left him. He smiled; the infernal invention would serve him for this purpose. With the aid of his pick-axe, Dantes dug between the upper rock and the one that supported it a mine similar to those formed by pioneers when they wish to spare human labor, filled it with powder, then made a match by rolling his hand-kerchief in saltpetre. He lighted it and retired.

The explosion was instantaneous; the upper rock was lifted from its base by the terrific force of the powder, the lower one flew into pieces; thousands of insects escaped from the aperture Dantes had previously formed, and a huge snake, like the guardian demon of the treas-

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ure, rolled himself along with a sinuous motion, and disappeared.

Dantes approached the upper rock, which, now without any support, leaned towards the sea. The intrepid treasure-seeker walked round it, and selecting the spot from whence it appeared most easy to attack it, placed his lever in one of the crevices and strained every nerve to move the mass.

The rock, already shaken by the explosion, tottered on its base. Dantes redoubled his efforts; he seemed like one of the ancient Titans, who uprooted the mountains to hurl against the father of the gods. The rock yielded, rolled, bounded, and finally disappeared in the ocean.

On the spot it had occupied was visible a circular place, and which exposed an iron ring let into a square flag-stone. Dantes uttered a cry of joy and surprise; never had a first attempt been crowned with more perfect success. He would fain have continued, but his knees trembled, his heart beat so violently, and his eyes became so dim, that he was forced to pause. This feeling lasted but for a moment. Edmond inserted his lever in the ring, and exerting all his strength, the flag-stone yielded, and disclosed a kind of stair that descended until it was lost in the obscurity of a subterraneous grotto. Any one else would have rushed on with a cry of joy. Dantes turned pale, hesitated, and reflected.

"Come," said he to himself, "be a man. I am accustomed to adversity. I must not be cast down by the discovery that I have been deceived. What, then, would be the use of all I have suffered? The heart breaks when, after having been elated by flattering hopes, it sees all these illusions destroyed. Faria has dreamed this; the Cardinal Spada buried no treasures here; perhaps he never came here, or if he did Cæsar Borgia,

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the intrepid adventurer, the stealthy and indefatigable plunderer, has followed him, discovered his traces, pursued them as I have done, like me, raised the stone, and descending before me has left me nothing." He remained motionless and pensive, his eyes fixed on the sombre aperture that was opened at his feet.

"Now that I expect nothing, now that I no longer entertain the slightest hopes, the end of this adventure becomes a simple matter of curiosity."

And he remained again motionless and thoughtful.

"Yes, yes; this is an adventure worthy a place in the lights and shades of the life of this royal bandit. This fabulous event has formed but a link of a vast chain. Yes, Borgia has been here, a torch in one hand, a sword in the other; whilst within twenty paces, at the foot of this rock, perhaps two guards kept watch on land and sea whilst their master descended as I am about to descend, dispelling the darkness before his terrible advance.

"But what was the fate of these guards who thus possessed his secret?" asked Dantes of himself.

"The fate," replied he, smiling, "of those who buried Alaric."

"Yet, had he come," thought Dantes, "he would have found the treasure; and Borgia, he who compared Italy to an artichoke, which he could devour leaf by leaf, knew too well the value of time to waste it in replacing this rock.

"I will go down."

Then he descended, a smile on his lips, and murmuring that last word of human philosophy, "Perhaps!"

But instead of the darkness, and the thick mephitic atmosphere he had expected to find, Dantes saw a dim and bluish light, which, as well as the air, entered, not

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merely by the aperture he had just formed, but by the interstices and crevices of the rock which were visible from without, and through which he could distinguish the blue sky and the waving branches of the evergreen oaks, and the tendrils of the creepers that grew from the rocks.

After having stood a few minutes in the cavern, the atmosphere of which was rather warm than damp, Dantes' eye, habituated as it was to darkness, could pierce even the most remote angles of the cavern, which was of granite, and sparkled like diamonds.

"Alas!" said Edmond, smiling, "these are the treasures the cardinal has left; and the good abbe, seeing in a dream these glittering walls, has indulged in fallacious hopes."

But he called to mind the words of the will, which he knew by heart: "In the farthest angle of the second opening," said the cardinal's will. He had only found the first grotto; he had now to seek the second.

Dantes commenced his search. He reflected that this second grotto must, doubtless, penetrate deeper into the isle; he examined the stones, and sounded one part of the wall where he fancied the opening existed, masked for precaution's sake.

The pickaxe sounded for a moment with a dull sound that covered Dantes' forehead with large drops of perspiration. At last it seemed to him that one part of the wall gave forth a more hollow and deeper echo; he eagerly advanced, and with the quickness of perception that no one but a prisoner possesses, saw that it was there, in all probability, the opening must be.

However, he, like Cæsar Borgia, knew the value of time; and, in order to avoid a fruitless toil, he sounded all the other walls with his pickaxe, struck the earth with

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the butt of his gun, and finding nothing that appeared suspicious, returned to that part of the wall whence issued the consoling sound he had before heard.

He again struck it, and with greater force.

Then a singular sight presented itself. As he struck the wall a species of stucco similar to that used as the ground of arabesques detached itself, and fell to the ground in flakes, exposing a large white stone. The aperture of the rock had been closed with stones, then this stucco had been applied, and painted to imitate granite.

Dantes struck with the sharp end of his pickaxe, which entered some way between the interstices of the stone.

It was there he must dig. But by some strange phenomenon of the human organization, in proportion as the proofs that Faria had not been deceived became stronger, so did his heart give way, and a feeling of discouragement steal over him. This last proof, instead of giving him fresh strength, deprived him of it; the pickaxe descended, or rather fell; he placed it on the ground, passed his hand over his brow, and remounted the stairs, alleging to himself as an excuse a desire to be assured that no one was watching him, but in reality because he felt he was ready to faint. The isle was deserted, and the sun seemed to cover it with its fiery glance; afar off a few small fishing boats studded the bosom of the blue ocean.

Dantes had tasted nothing, but he thought not of hunger at such a moment; he hastily swallowed a few drops of rum, and again entered the cavern. The pickaxe that had seemed so heavy was now like a feather in his grasp; he seized it and again attacked the wall. After several blows he perceived that the stones were not cemented, but merely placed one upon

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the other, and covered with stucco; he inserted the point of his pickaxe, and using the handle as a lever, soon saw with joy the stone turn as if on hinges, and fall at his feet. He had nothing more to do now but with the iron tooth of the pickaxe to draw the stones towards him one by one. The first aperture was sufficiently large to enter, but by waiting, he could still cling to hope, and retard the certainty of deception.

At last after fresh hesitation, Dantes entered the second grotto. The second grotto was lower and more gloomy than the former; the air that could only enter by the newly formed opening had that mephitic smell Dantes was surprised not to find in the first. He waited in order to allow pure air to displace the foul atmosphere, and then entered. At the left of the opening was a dark and deep angle. But to Dantes' eye there was no darkness. He glanced round this second grotto; it was, like the first, empty.

The treasure, if it existed, was buried in this corner. The time had at length arrived; two feet of earth removed, and Dantes' fate would be decided. He advanced towards the angle, and summoning all his resolution, attacked the ground with the pickaxe. At the fifth or sixth blow the pickaxe struck against an iron substance. Never did funeral knell, never did alarm-bell produce a greater effect on the hearer. Had Dantes found nothing, he could not have become more ghastly pale. He again struck his pickaxe into the earth, and encountered the same resistance, but not the same sound.

"It is a casket of wood bound with iron," thought he.

At this moment a shadow passed rapidly before the opening; Dantes seized his gun, sprang to the opening,

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and mounted the stair. A wild goat had passed before the mouth of the cave, and was feeding at a little distance.

This would have been a favorable occasion to secure his dinner; but Dantes feared lest the report of his gun should attract attention.

He reflected an instant, cut a branch of a resinous tree, lighted it at the fire at which the smugglers had prepared their breakfast, and descended with this torch. He wished to see all. He approached the hole that he had formed with the torch, and saw that his pickaxe had in reality struck against iron and wood. He planted his torch in the ground and resumed his labor. In an instant a space three feet long by two feet broad was cleared, and Dantes could see an oaken coffer bound with cut steel; in the midst of the lid he saw engraved on a silver plate, which was still untarnished, the arms of the Spada family, viz., a sword *pale* on an oval shield, like all the Italian armorial bearings, and surmounted by a cardinal's hat; Dantes easily recognized them, Faria had so often drawn them for him. There was no longer any doubt the treasure was there; no one would have been at such pains to conceal an empty casket.

In an instant he had cleared every obstacle away, and he saw successively the lock, placed between two padlocks, and the two handles at each end, all carved as things were carved at that epoch when art rendered the commonest metals precious. Dantes seized the handles, and strove to lift the coffer; it was impossible. He sought to open it; lock and padlock were closed; these faithful guardians seemed unwilling to surrender their trust. Dantes inserted the sharp end of his pickaxe between the coffer and the lid, and pressing with all his force on the handle, burst open the fastenings. The

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hinges yielded in their turn and fell, still holding in their grasp fragments of the planks, and all was open.

A vertigo seized Edmond; he cocked his gun and laid it beside him. He then closed his eyes as children do in order to perceive in the shining night of their own imagination more stars than are visible in the firmament; then he reopened them, and stood motionless with amazement.

Three compartments divided the coffer. In the first blazed piles of golden coin. In the second, bars of unpolished gold, which possessed nothing attractive save their value, were ranged. In the third, Edmond grasped handfuls of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, which, as they fell on one another, sounded like hail against glass.

After having touched, felt, examined these treasures, Edmond rushed through the caverns like a man seized with frenzy; he leapt on a rock, from whence he could behold the sea. He was alone. Alone with these countless, these unheard-of treasures. Was he awake, or was it but a dream?

He would fain have gazed upon the gold, and yet he had not strength enough; for an instant he leaned his head in his hands as if to prevent his senses from leaving him, and then rushed madly about the rocks of Monte-Cristo, terrifying the wild goats and scaring the sea-fowls with his wild cries and gestures; then he returned, and still unable to believe the evidence of his senses, rushed into the grotto, and found himself before this mine of gold and jewels. This time he fell on his knees, and clasping his hands convulsively, uttered a prayer intelligible to God alone. He soon felt himself calmer and more happy, for now only he began to credit his felicity.

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He then set himself to work to count his fortune. There were a thousand ingots of gold, each weighing from two to three pounds; then he piled up twenty-five thousand crowns, each worth about four pounds sterling of our money, and bearing the effigies of Alexander VI. and his predecessors, and he saw that the compartment was not half empty. And he measured ten double handfuls of precious stones, many of which, mounted by the most famous workmen, were valuable for their execution. Dantes saw the light gradually disappear; and fearing to be surprised in the cavern, left it, his gun in his hand. A piece of biscuit and a small quantity of rum formed his supper, and he snatched a few hours' sleep, lying over the mouth of the cave.

This night was one of those delicious and yet terrible ones of which he had already passed two or three in his lifetime.

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CHAPTER XXV.

THE UNKNOWN.

DAYLIGHT, for which Dantes had so eagerly and impatiently waited, again dawned on the desert shores of Monte-Cristo. With the first dawn of day Dantes resumed his researches. Again he climbed the rocky height he had ascended the previous evening, and strained his view to catch every peculiarity of the landscape; but it wore the same wild, barren aspect when seen by the rays of the morning sun which it had done when surveyed by the fading glimmer of eve. Returning to the entrance of the cave, he raised the stone that covered it; and descending to the place that contained the treasure, filled his pockets with precious stones, put the box together as well and securely as he could, sprinkled fresh sand over the spot from which it had been taken, and then carefully trod down the ground to give it everywhere a similar appearance; then quitting the grotto, he replaced the stone, heaping on it broken masses of rocks and rough fragments of crumbling granite, filling the interstices with earth, into which was skilfully mingled a quantity of rapidly growing plants, such as the wild myrtle and flowering thorn, then carefully watering these new plantations, he scrupulously effaced every trace of footmark, leaving the approach to the cavern as savage-looking and untrodden

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as he had found it. This done, he impatiently awaited the return of his companions. To wait at Monte-Cristo for the purpose of watching over the almost incalculable riches that had thus fallen into his possession satisfied not the craving of his heart, which yearned to return to dwell among mankind, and to assume the rank, power, and influence unbounded wealth alone can bestow.

On the sixth day the smugglers returned. From a distance Dantes recognized the cut and manner of sailing of "La Jeune Amelie," and dragging himself with affected difficulty towards the landing-place, he met his companions with an assurance that, although considerably better than when they quitted him, he still suffered acutely from his late accident. He then inquired how they had fared in their trip.

To this question the smugglers replied that although successful in landing their cargo in safety, they had scarcely done so when they received intelligence that a guard-ship had just quitted the port of Toulon, and was crowding all sail towards them; this obliged them to make all the speed they could to evade the enemy; when they could but lament the absence of Dantes, whose superior skill in the management of a vessel would have availed them so materially. In fact the chasing vessel had almost overtaken them, when, fortunately, night came on, and enabled them to double the Cape of Corsica, and so elude all further pursuit.

Upon the whole, however, the trip had been sufficiently successful to satisfy all concerned; while the crew, and particularly Jacopo, expressed great regrets at Dantes not having been an equal sharer with themselves in the profits, amounting to no less a sum than fifty piastres each.

Edmond preserved the most admirable self-command,

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not suffering the faintest indication of a smile to escape him at the enumeration of all the benefits he would have reaped had he been able to quit the isle; but as "La Jeune Amelie" had merely come to Monte Cristo to fetch him away, he embarked that same evening, and proceeded with the captain to Leghorn. Arrived at Leghorn, he repaired to the house of a Jew, a dealer in precious stones, to whom he disposed of four of his smallest diamonds for five thousand francs each.

Dantes half feared that such valuable jewels in the hands of a poor sailor like himself might excite suspicion; but the cunning purchaser asked no troublesome questions concerning a bargain by which he gained at least four thousand francs.

The following day Dantes presented Jacopo with an entirely new vessel, accompanying the gift by a donation of one hundred piastres, that he might provide himself with a suitable crew and other requisites for his outfit, upon condition of his going direct to Marseilles, for the purpose of inquiring after an old man named Louis Dantes, residing in the Allees de Meillan, and also a young female called Mercedes, an inhabitant of the Catalan village.

Jacopo could scarcely believe his senses at receiving this munificent present, which Dantes hastened to account for by saying that he had merely been a sailor from whim and a desire to spite his friends, who did not allow him as much money as he liked to spend; but that on his arrival at Leghorn, he had come into possession of a large fortune left him by an uncle, whose sole heir he was. The superior education of Dantes gave an air of such extreme probability to this statement, that it never once occurred to Jacopo to doubt its accuracy.

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The term for which Edmond had engaged to serve on board "La Jeune Amelie" having expired, Dantes took leave of the captain, who at first tried all his powers of persuasion to induce him to remain one of the crew, but having been told the history of the legacy, he ceased to importune him further. The succeeding morning Jacopo set sail for Marseilles, with directions from Dantes to rejoin him at the Island of Monte-Cristo.

Having seen Jacopo fairly out of the harbor, Dantes proceeded to make his final adieus on board "La Jeune Amelie"; distributing so liberal a gratuity among the crew as procured him unanimous good wishes and expressions of cordial interest in all that concerned him; to the captain he promised to write when he had made up his mind as to his future plans; this leave-taking over, Dantes departed for Genoa. At the moment of his arrival a small yacht was being tried in the bay; this yacht had been built by order of an Englishman, who, having heard that the Genoese excelled all other builders along the shores of the Mediterranean in the construction of fast-sailing vessels, was desirous of possessing a specimen of their skill; the price agreed upon between the Englishman and Genoese builder was forty thousand francs.

Dantes, struck with the beauty and capability of the little vessel, applied to its owner to transfer it to him, offering sixty thousand francs, upon condition of being allowed to take immediate possession of it; the proposal was too advantageous to be refused; the more so, as the person for whom the yacht was intended had gone upon a tour through Switzerland, and was not expected back in less than three weeks or a month, by which time the builder reckoned upon being able to complete another.

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A bargain was therefore struck. Dantes led the owner of the yacht to the dwelling of a Jew; retired with the latter individual for a few minutes to a small back parlor, and upon their return from thence the Jew counted out to the ship-builder the sum of sixty thousand francs in bright golden money.

The delighted builder then offered his services in providing a suitable crew for the little vessel, but this Dantes declined, with many thanks; saying he was accustomed to cruise about quite alone, and his principal pleasure consisted in managing his yacht himself; the only thing the builder could oblige him in would be to contrive a sort of secret closet in the cabin at his bed's head; the closet to contain three divisions, so constructed as to be concealed from all but himself. The builder cheerfully undertook the commission, and promised to have these secret places completed by the next day; Dantes furnishing the size and plan upon which he desired they should be arranged.

The following day Dantes sailed with his yacht from the port of Genoa, amid the gaze of an immense crowd drawn together by curiosity to see the rich Spanish nobleman who preferred managing his vessel himself; but their wonder was soon exchanged for admiration at the perfect skill with which Dantes handled the helm, and without quitting it making his little vessel perform every movement he chose to direct; his bark seemed indeed replete with all but human intelligence, so promptly did it obey the slightest impulse given; and Dantes required but a short trial of his beautiful craft to acknowledge that it was not without truth the Genoese had attained their high reputation in the art of ship-building.

The spectators followed the little vessel with their

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eyes so long as it remained visible; they then turned their conjectures upon her probable destination; some insisted she was making for Corsica, others to the Isle of Elba; bets were offered to any amount that she was bound for Spain; while Africa was positively reported by many persons as her intended course, but no one thought of Monte-Cristo.

Yet, thither it was that Dantes guided his vessel, and at Monte-Cristo he arrived at the close of the second day; his bark had proved herself a first-class sailor, and had come the distance from Genoa in thirty-five hours. Dantes had carefully noted the general appearance of the shore, and instead of landing at the usual place he dropped anchor in the little creek.

The isle was utterly deserted, nor did it seem as though human foot had trodden on it since he quitted it; his treasure was just as he had left it.

Early on the following morning he commenced the removal of his riches, and ere night-fall the whole of his immense wealth was safely deposited in the secret compartments of his hidden closet.

A week passed by. Dantes employed it manœuvring his yacht round the island, studying it as a skilful horseman would the animal he destined for some important service, till at the end of that time he was perfectly conversant with its good and bad qualities. The former Dantes proposed to augment, the latter to remedy.

Upon the eighth day of his being on the island he discerned a small vessel crowding all sail towards Monte-Cristo. As it neared, he recognized it as the bark he had given to Jacopo; he immediately signalled it; his signal was returned, and in two hours afterwards the bark lay at anchor beside the yacht.

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A mournful answer awaited each of Edmond's eager inquiries as to the information Jacopo had obtained.

Old Dantes was dead, and Mercedes had disappeared.

Dantes listened to these melancholy tidings with outward calmness; but leaping lightly ashore he signified his desire to be quite alone. In a couple of hours he returned. Two of the men from Jacopo's bark came on board the yacht to assist in navigating it, and he commanded she should be steered direct to Marseilles.

For his father's death, he was in some manner prepared; but how to account for the mysterious disappearance of Mercedes he knew not.

Without divulging his secret, Dantes could not give sufficiently clear instructions to an agent—there were, besides, other particulars he was desirous of ascertaining, and those were of a nature he alone could investigate in a manner satisfactory to himself. His looking-glass had assured him during his stay at Leghorn that he ran no risk of recognition; added to which, he had now the means of adopting any disguise he thought proper. One fine morning then, his yacht, followed by the little bark, boldly entered the port of Marseilles, and anchored exactly opposite the memorable spot from whence, on the never-to-be-forgotten night of his departure for the Chateau d'If, he had been put on board the vessel destined to convey him thither.

Still Dantes could not view without a shudder the approach of a gendarme who accompanied the officers, deputed to demand his bill of health, ere the yacht was permitted to hold communication with the shore; but with that perfect self-possession he had acquired during his acquaintance with Faria, Dantes coolly presented an English passport he had obtained from Leghorn, and with that prompt attention which all such English

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documents receive, he was informed there existed no obstacle to his immediate debarkation.

The first object that attracted the attention of Dantes as he landed on the Canebiere was one of the crew belonging to the "Pharaoh." Edmond hailed the appearance of this man, who had served under himself, as a sure test of the safe and perfect change time had worked in his own appearance; going straight towards him, he commenced a variety of questions on different subjects, carefully watching the man's countenance as he did so; but not a word or look implied his having the slightest idea of ever having seen before the individual with whom he was then conversing.

Giving the sailor a piece of money in return for his civility, Dantes proceeded onwards, but ere he had gone many steps he heard the man loudly calling him to stop. Dantes instantly turned to meet him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the honest fellow, in almost breathless haste; "but I believe you made a mistake; you intended to give me a two-franc piece, and see, you gave me a double Napoleon."

"Thank you, my good friend; I see that I made a trifling mistake, as you say, but by way of rewarding your honest spirit, I give you another double Napoleon that you may drink to my health, and be able to ask your messmates to join you."

So extreme was the surprise of the sailor, that he was unable even to thank Edmond, whose receding figure he continued to gaze after in speechless astonishment; at length, when Dantes had wholly disappeared, he drew a deep breath, and with another look at his gold he returned to the quay, saying to himself, "Ah! that's one of them nabob gentlemen from Ingy, no doubt; nobody else could afford to chuck gold about like that.

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Well, he said I was to drink to his health, and so I will with all my heart."

Dantes meanwhile continued his route; each step he trod oppressed his heart with fresh emotion; his first and most indelible recollections were there; not a tree, not a street that he passed but seemed filled with dear and cherished reminiscences. And thus he proceeded onwards till he arrived at the end of Rue de Noailles, from whence a full view of the Allees de Meillan was obtained; at this spot, so pregnant with fond and filial remembrances, his heart beat almost to bursting, his knees tottered under him, a misty vapor floated over his sight; and had he not clung for support to one of the trees, he would inevitably have fallen to the ground and been crushed beneath the many vehicles continually passing there. Recovering himself, however, he wiped the perspiration from his brows, and stopped not again till he found himself at the door of the house in which his father had lived.

The nasturtiums and other plants which his parent had delighted to train before his window had all disappeared from the upper part of the house; leaning against a tree he remained long gazing on those windows at which the busy hand of the active old man might be daily seen training and arranging his floral treasures. But Edmond remembered he had come thither for other reasons than to indulge a grief, now alas! unavailing; and, stifling the deep sigh that rose to his lips, he advanced to the door and inquired whether there were any chambers to be let in the house; though answered in the negative, he begged so earnestly to be permitted to visit those on the fifth floor, that, in despite of the *concierge's* oft-repeated assurance of their being occupied, Dantes succeeded in inducing the

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man to go up to the present possessors of these coveted rooms, and ask permission for a gentleman to be allowed to look at them. The tenants of the humble lodging, once the scene of all Dantes' early joys, consisted of a young couple who had been scarcely married a week, and the sight of a wedded happiness he was doomed never to experience drove a bitter pang through his heart. Nothing in the two small chambers forming the apartments remained as it had been in the time of the elder Dantes; the very paper was different, while the articles of antiquated furniture with which the rooms had been filled in Edmond's time had all disappeared. The four walls alone remained as he had left them. The bed belonging to the present occupants was placed as the former owner of the chamber had been accustomed to have his; and, in spite of his efforts to prevent it, the eyes of Edmond were suffused in tears, as he reflected that on that spot his beloved parent had expired vainly calling for his son. The young couple gazed with astonishment at the sight of their visitor's emotion, and wondered to see the large tears silently chase each other down his otherwise stern and immovable features; but they felt the sacredness of his grief, and kindly refrained from questioning him as to its cause, while, with instinctive delicacy, they left him to indulge his sorrow alone. When he withdrew from the scene of his painful recollections they both accompanied him downstairs, reiterating their hope that he would come again whenever he pleased, and assuring him their poor dwelling should ever be opened to him. As Edmond passed the door of similar rooms on the fourth floor, he paused to inquire whether Caderousse, the tailor, still dwelt there; but he received for reply, that the individual in question had got into difficulties, and at

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the present time kept a small inn on the route from Bellegarde to Beaucaire.

Having obtained the address of the person to whom the house in the Allees de Meillan belonged, Dantes next proceeded thither, and, under the name of Lord Wilmore (the same appellation as that contained in his passport) purchased the small dwelling for the sum of 25,000 francs, at least 10,000 more than it was worth; but had its owner asked ten times the sum he did, it would unhesitatingly have been given. The very same day the occupants of the apartments on the fifth floor of the house, now become the property of Dantes, were duly informed by the notary who had arranged the necessary transfer of deeds, etc., that the new landlord gave them their choice of any of the rooms in the house, without the least augmentation of rent, upon condition of their giving instant possession of the two small chambers they at present inhabited.

This strange event served to find food for wonder and curiosity in the neighborhood of the Allees de Meillan, and a multitude of various conjectures were afloat as to the probable cause of the house being so suddenly and mysteriously disposed of; but each surmise seemed to wander farther and farther from the real truth.

But that which raised public astonishment to a climax, and set all speculations at defiance, was the circumstance of the same stranger who had in the morning visited the Allees de Meillan, being seen in the evening walking in the little village of the Catalans, and afterwards observed to enter a poor fisherman's hut, and to pass more than an hour in inquiring after persons who had either been dead or gone away for more than fifteen or sixteen years. But on the following day, the family from whom all these particulars had been asked received

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a handsome present, consisting of an entirely new fishing-boat, with a full supply of excellent nets.

The delighted recipients of these munificent gifts would gladly have poured out their thanks to their generous benefactor; but they had seen him, upon quitting the hut, merely give some orders to a sailor, and then, springing lightly on horseback, quit Marseilles by the Porte d'Aix.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE AUBERGE OF PONT DU GARD.

SUCH of my readers as have made a pedestrian excursion to the south of France may perchance have noticed midway between the town of Beaucaire and the village of Bellegarde a small roadside inn, from the front of which hung, creaking and flapping in the wind, a sheet of tin, covered with a caricature resemblance of the Pont du Gard. This modern place of entertainment stood on the left-hand side of the grand route, turning its back upon the Rhone. It also boasted of what in Languedoc is styled a garden, consisting of a small plot of ground, a full view of which might be obtained from a door immediately opposite the grand portal by which travellers were ushered in to partake of the hospitality of mine host of the Pont du Gard. This plaisance of garden, scorched up beneath the ardent sun of a latitude of thirty degrees, permitted nothing to thrive or scarcely live in its arid soil; a few dingy olives and stunted fig-trees struggled hard for existence, but their withered, dusty foliage abundantly proved how unequal was the conflict; between these sickly shrubs grew a scanty supply of garlic, tomatoes, and eschalots, while, lone and solitary, like a forgotten sentinel, a tall pine raised its melancholy head in one of the corners of this unattractive spot, and displayed its flexible stem and

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fan-shaped summit, dried and cracked by the withering influence of the mistral, that scourge of Provence.

In the surrounding plain, which more resembled a dusty lake than solid ground, were scattered a few miserable stalks of wheat, the effect, no doubt, of a curious desire on the part of the agriculturists of the country to see whether such a thing as the raising of grain in those parched regions was practicable; the scanty produce, however, served to accommodate the numerous grasshoppers, who follow the unfortunate invader of this bare soil with untiring persecution, resting themselves after their chase upon the stunted specimens of horticulture, while they filled the ear with their sharp, shrill cry.

For nearly the last eight years the small auberge we have just been describing had been kept by a man and his wife, with two servants; one, a strong, sturdy wench answering to the name of Trinette, officiated in the capacity of chambermaid, while the other, a shock-headed country lad, named Pacaud, undertook the management of the outer-door work, and contented himself with the title of *garçon d'écurie*, or ostler, as we should style it in English: but alas! the occupation of each domestic was but nominal, for a canal recently made between Beaucaire and Aiguemortes had proved a most successful speculation, and had transferred the mode of sending merchandise and luggage from the heavy wagons to the towed barge, while travellers forsook the diligence to glide over the smooth waters by the more agreeable aid of the steamboat. And as though to add to the daily misery which this prosperous canal inflicted on the unfortunate aubergiste, whose utter ruin it was fast accomplishing, it was situated not a hundred steps from the forsaken inn, of which we have given so faithful a description.

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The aubergiste himself was a man of from forty to forty-five years of age, tall, strong, and bony, a perfect specimen of the natives of those southern latitudes; he had the dark, sparkling, and deep-set eye, curved nose, and teeth white as those of a carnivorous animal; his hair, which, spite of the light touch time had as yet left on it, seemed as though it refused to assume any other color than its own, was like his beard, which he wore under his chin, thick and curly, and but slightly mingled with a few silvery threads. His naturally murky complexion had assumed a still further shade of brown, from the habit the unfortunate man had acquired of stationing himself from early morn till latest eve at the threshold of his door, in eager hope that some traveller, either equestrian or pedestrian, might bless his eyes, and give him the delight of once more seeing a guest enter his doors; but his patience and his expectations were alike useless; yet there he stood, day after day, exposed to the meridianal rays of a burning sun, with no other protection for his head than a red handkerchief twisted around it, after the manner of the Spanish muleteers. This anxious, careworn aubergiste was no other than our *ci-devant* acquaintance, Caderousse. His wife, on the contrary, whose maiden name had been Madeleine Radelle, was pale, meagre, and sickly looking. Born in the neighborhood of Arles, she had shared in the beauty for which its females are proverbial; but that beauty had gradually withered beneath the devastating influence of one of those slow fevers so prevalent in the vicinity of the waters of the Aiguemortes and the marshes of Camargue. She remained nearly always in her chamber, situated on the first floor; sitting shivering in her chair or extended languid or feeble on her bed, while her husband kept

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his daily watch at the door—a duty he performed with so much the greater willingness, as it saved him the necessity of listening to the endless plaints and murmurs of his helpmate, who never saw him without breaking out into bitter invectives against fate and the unmerited hardships she was called upon to endure; to all of which her husband would calmly return an unvarying reply couched in these philosophic words:

"Cease to grieve about it, La Carconte. It is God's pleasure that you should suffer, and whether you like it or not you must bear it."

The sobriquet of La Carconte had been bestowed on Madeleine Radelle from the circumstance of her having been born in a village so called, situated between Salon and Lanbese, and as a custom existed among the inhabitants of that part of France where Caderousse lived of styling every person by some particular and distinctive appellation, her husband had bestowed on her the name of La Carconte in place of her sweet and euphonious name of Madeleine, which, in all probability, his rude guttural language would not have enabled him to pronounce.

Still, let it not be supposed that amid this affected resignation to the will of Providence, the unfortunate aubergiste did not writhe under the double misery of seeing the hateful canal carry off alike his customers and profits, and the daily implication of his peevish partner's murmurs and lamentations.

Like other dwellers in the south, he was a man of sober habits and moderate desires, but fond of external show, vain, and addicted to display. During the days of his prosperity, not a *fête*, festivity, or ceremonial took place without himself and wife being among the spectators. He dressed in the picturesque costume worn upon

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grand occasions by the inhabitants of the south of France, bearing equal resemblance to the style adopted both by the Catalans and Andalusians: while La Carconte displayed the charming fashion prevalent among the females of Arles, a mode of attire borrowed equally from Greece and Arabia. But, by degrees, watch-chains, necklaces, many-colored scarfs, embroidered bodices, velvet vests, elegantly worked stockings, striped gaiters, and silver buckles for the shoes, all disappeared; and Gaspard Caderousse, unable to appear abroad in his pristine splendor, had given up any further participation in these pomps and vanities, both for himself or wife, although a bitter feeling of envious discontent filled his mind as the sound of mirth and merry music from the joyous revellers reached even the miserable hostelry, to which he still clung, more for the shelter than the profit it afforded.

On the present day, Caderousse was, as usual, at his place of observation before the door, his eyes glancing listlessly from a piece of closely shaven grass—on which some fowls were industriously, though fruitlessly, endeavoring to turn up some grain or insect suited to their palate—to the deserted road, the two extremities of which pointed respectively north and south, when he was roused from his daily speculations as to the possibility of the auberge of the Pont du Gard ever again being called upon to exercise its hospitable capabilities to any chance visitant, by the shrill voice of his wife summoning him to her presence with all speed. Murmuring at the disagreeable interruption to his not very agreeable thoughts, he, however, proceeded to the floor in which was situated the chamber of his better half—taking care, however, preparatory to so doing, to set the entrance-door wide open, that, in the event of that *rara*

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avis, a traveller, passing by, it should be made perfectly clear to his comprehension that no ceremony was requisite in entering.

At the moment Caderousse quitted his sentry-like watch before the door, the road on which he so eagerly strained his sight was void and lonely as a desert at mid-day. There it lay stretched out, one interminable line of dust and sand, with its sides bordered by tall, meagre trees, altogether presenting so uninviting an appearance, that no one in their senses could have imagined that any traveller, at liberty to regulate his hours for journeying, would choose to expose himself to the scorch of a meridian sun in such a formidable Sahara. Nevertheless, had Caderousse but retained his post a few minutes longer, he might have caught a dim outline of something approaching from the direction of Bellegarde; as the moving object drew nearer, he would easily have perceived it consisted of a man and a horse, between whom the kindest and most amiable understanding appeared to exist. The horse was of Hungarian breed, and ambled along with that easy pace peculiar to that race of animals. His rider was a priest, dressed in black, and wearing a three-cornered hat; and, spite of the ardent rays of a noonday sun, the pair came on at a tolerably smart trot.

Having arrived before the Auberge du Pont du Gard, the horse stopped, but whether for his own pleasure or that of his rider would have been difficult to say. However that might have been, the measure appeared reciprocally agreeable, since no demur was observable in either. The priest, dismounting, led his steed by the bridle in search of some place to which he could secure him. Availing himself of a handle that projected from a half-fallen door, he tied the animal safely, patted him

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kindly, and, having drawn a red cotton handkerchief from his pocket, wiped away the perspiration that streamed from his brow; then, advancing to the door, struck thrice with the end of his iron-shod stick. At this unusual sound, a huge black dog came rushing to meet the daring assailant of his ordinarily tranquil abode, snarling and displaying his sharp, white teeth with a determined hostility that abundantly proved how little he was accustomed to society. At that moment a heavy footstep was heard descending the wooden staircase that led from the upper floor, and, with many bows and courteous smiles, mine host of the Pont du Gard welcomed the blessing heaven had sent him in the shape of a weary traveller; while, retreating into the house with backward step, he besought his guest would honor him by entering also.

"You are welcome, sir, most welcome!" repeated the astonished Caderousse, in his blandest tones. "Now, then, Margontin," cried he, speaking to the dog, "will you be quiet? Pray don't heed him, sir!—he only barks; he never bites! I make no doubt a glass of good wine would be acceptable this dreadfully hot day!" Then perceiving for the first time the description of traveller he had to entertain, Caderousse hastily exclaimed, "A thousand pardons, your reverence! I really did not observe whom I had the honor to receive under my poor roof. What would you please to have, M. l'Abbe? What refreshment can I offer you? All I have is at your service."

The priest gazed on the individual addressing him with a long and searching gaze—there even seemed like a disposition on his part to court a similar scrutiny on the part of the aubergiste; then, remarking in the countenance of the latter no other expression than

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extreme surprise at his own want of attention to an inquiry so courteously worded, he deemed it as well to terminate this dumb show, and, therefore, said, speaking with a strong Italian accent:

"You are, I presume, M. Caderousse?"

"Your reverence is quite correct," answered the host, even more surprised at the question than he had been by the silence which had prefaced it; "I am Gaspard Caderousse, at your service."

"Gaspard Caderousse!" rejoined the priest. "Yes, that agrees both with the baptismal appellation and surname of the individual I allude to. You formerly lived, I believe, in the Allees de Meillan, on the fourth floor of a small house situated there?"

"I did."

"Where you followed the business of a tailor?"

"True, I was a tailor, till the trade fell off so as not to afford me a living. Then it is so very hot at Marseilles, that really I could not bear it no longer; and it is my idea that all the respectable inhabitants will be obliged to follow my example and quit it. But, talking of heat, is there nothing I can offer you by way of refreshment?"

"Yes; let me have a bottle of your best wine, and then, with your permission, we will resume our conversation from where we left off."

"As you please, M. l'Abbe," said Caderousse, who, anxious not to lose the present opportunity of finding a customer for one of the few bottles of vin de Cahors still remaining in his possession, hastily raised a trap-door in the floor of the apartment they were in, which served both as parlor and kitchen.

Upon his issuing forth from his subterranean retreat at the expiration of five minutes, he found the abbe

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"Caderousse placed before him the bottle of wine and a glass."

Photo-Etching — From Drawing by Frank T. Merrill.

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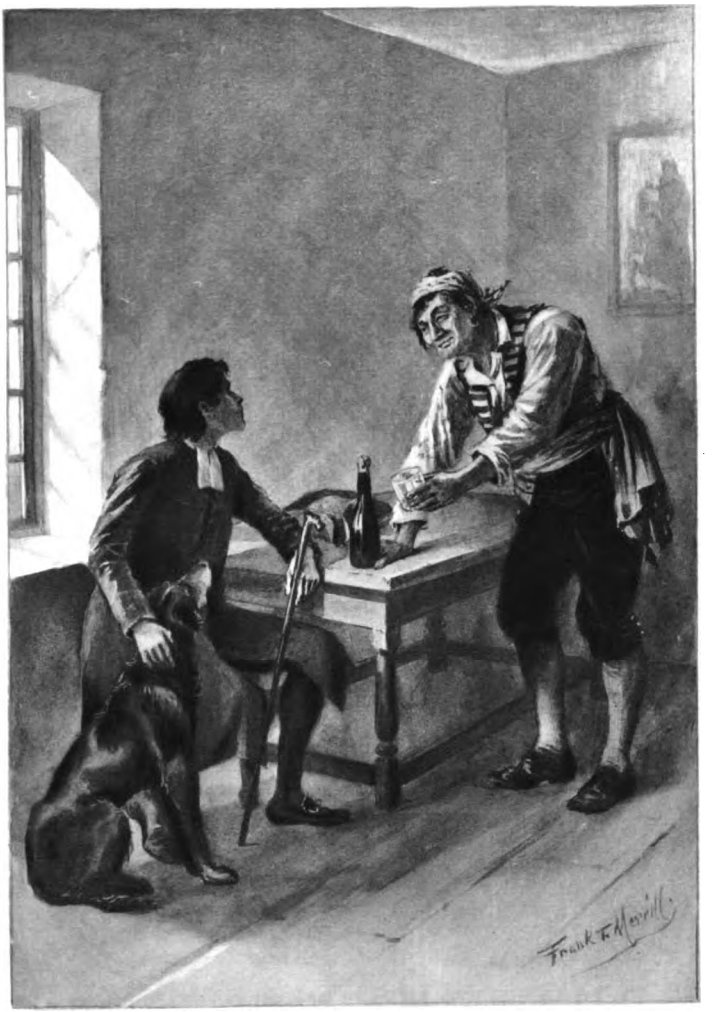

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seated on a species of stool, leaning his elbow on a table, while Margontin, whose animosity seemed appeased by the traveller having pronounced the unusual command for refreshments, had crept up to him, and had established himself very comfortably between his knees, his long, skinny neck resting on his lap, while his dim eye was fixed earnestly on the traveller's face.

"Are you quite alone?" inquired the guest, as Caderousse placed before him the bottle of wine and a glass.

"Quite, quite alone," replied the man—"or, at least, all but so, M. l'Abbe; for my poor wife, who is the only person in the house besides myself, is laid up with illness, and unable to render me the least assistance, poor thing!"

"You are married, then?" said the priest, with a species of interest, glancing round as he spoke, at the scanty style of the accommodations and humble fittings-up of the apartment.

"Ah, M. l'Abbe," said Caderousse, with a sigh, "it is easy to perceive I am not a rich man; but in this world a man does not thrive the better for being honest."

The abbe fixed on him a searching, penetrating glance.

"I can certainly say that much for myself," repeated the aubergiste, fairly sustaining the scrutiny of the abbe's gaze. "I can boast with truth of being an honest man;" and, continued he, significantly shaking his head, "that is more than every one can say nowadays."

"So much the better for you if what you assert be true," said the abbe; "for I am firmly persuaded that, sooner or later, the good will be rewarded, and the wicked punished."

"Such words as those belong to your profession, M. l'Abbe," answered Caderousse, "and you do well to repeat them; but," added he, with a bitter expression

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of countenance, "you cannot make people believe them in opposition to what passes before them every day, when the reverse takes place, and it is the wicked man who prospers, and the honest, deserving man who suffers."

"You are wrong to speak thus," said the abbe; "and, perhaps, I may in my own person be able to prove to you how completely you are in error in coming to so mischievous and dangerous a conclusion."

"What mean you?" inquired Caderousse, with a look of surprise.

"In the first place, it is requisite I should be satisfied you are the person I am in search of!"

"What proofs do you require?"

"Did you in the year 1814 or 1815 know anything of a young sailor named Edmond Dantes?"

"Did I? I should think I did. Poor dear Edmond! Why, Edmond Dantes and myself were intimate friends!" exclaimed Caderousse, whose countenance assumed an almost purple hue, as he caught the penetrating gaze of the abbe fixed on him, while the clear, calm eye of the questioner seemed to cover him with confusion.

"You remind me," said the priest, "that the young man, concerning whom I asked you, was said to bear the name of Edmond?"

"Said to bear the name!" repeated Caderousse, becoming excited and eager. "Why, he was so called as truly as I myself bore the appellation of Gaspard Caderousse; but, M. l'Abbe, tell me, I pray, what has become of poor Edmond. Did you know him? Is he alive and at liberty? Is he prosperous and happy?"

"He died a more wretched, hopeless, heart-broken prisoner than the felons who pay the penalty of their crimes at the galleys of Toulon!"

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A deadly paleness succeeded the deep suffusion which had before spread itself over the countenance of Caderousse, who turned away, but not so much so as to prevent the priest's observing him wiping away the tears from his eyes with a corner of the red handkerchief twisted round his head.

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" murmured Caderousse. "Well, there, M. l'Abbe, is another proof that good people are never rewarded on this earth, and that none but the wicked prosper. Ah," continued Caderousse, speaking in the highly colored language of the south, "the world grows worse and worse. Why does not God, if he really hates the wicked, as he is said to do, send down brimstone and fire and consume them altogether?"

"You speak as though you had loved this young Dantes?" observed the abbe, without taking any notice of his companion's vehemence.

"And so I did," replied Caderousse, "though once I confess I envied him his good fortune; but I swear to you, M. l'Abbe, I swear to you, by everything a man holds dear, I have since then deeply and sincerely lamented his unhappy fate."

There was a brief silence, during which the fixed, searching eye of the abbe was employed in scrutinizing the agitated features of the aubergiste.

"You knew the poor lad, then?" continued Caderousse.

"Nay, I merely called to see him when on his dying bed, that I might administer to him the consolation of religion."

"And of what did he die?" asked Caderousse, in a choking voice.

"Of what, think you, do young and strong men die in prison, when they have scarcely numbered their thirti-

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eth year, unless it be of the horrors of that prison which has spread its stony walls against their breathing the air of heaven, or participating in the secret affections a gracious Creator permitted to find growth within the human breast? Edmond Dantes died in prison of sorrow and a broken heart."

Caderousse wiped away the large drops of perspiration that gathered on his brow.

"But the strangest part of the story is," resumed the abbe, "that Dantes, even in his dying moments, swore by his crucified Redeemer, that he was utterly ignorant of the cause of his imprisonment."

"And so he was," murmured Caderousse. "How should he have been otherwise? Ah, M. l'Abbe, the poor fellow told you the truth."

"And for that reason he besought me to try and clear up the mystery he had never been able to penetrate, and to clear his memory should any foul spot or stain have fallen on it."

And here the look of the abbe, becoming more and more fixed, seemed to rest with ill-concealed satisfaction on the gloomy depression which seemed rapidly spreading over the countenance of Caderousse.

"A rich Englishman," continued the abbe, "who had been his companion in misfortune, but had been released from prison during the second restoration, was possessed of a diamond of immense value: this precious jewel he bestowed on Dantes upon himself quitting the prison, as a mark of his gratitude for the kindness and brotherly care with which Dantes had nursed him in a severe illness he underwent during his confinement. Instead of employing this diamond in attempting to bribe his jailers, who might have taken it and then betrayed him to the governor, Dantes carefully preserved it, that

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in the event of his getting out of prison he might have wherewithal to live, for the produce of such a diamond would have quite sufficed to make his fortune."

"Then, I suppose," asked Caderousse, with eager glowing looks, "that it was a stone of immense value."

"Why, everything is relative," answered the abbe. "To one in Edmond's position, the diamond certainly was of great value. It was estimated at 50,000 francs."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Caderousse, "what a sum! 50,000 francs! Surely the diamond was as large as a nut to be worth all that?"

"No," replied the abbe, "it was not of such a size as that; but you shall judge for yourself, I have it with me."

The sharp gaze of Caderousse was instantly directed towards the priest's garments, as though hoping to discover the talked-of treasure.

Calmly drawing forth from his pocket a small box covered with black shagreen, the abbe opened it, and displayed to the delighted eyes of Caderousse the sparkling jewel it contained, set in a ring of admirable workmanship.

"And that diamond," cried Caderousse, almost breathless with eager admiration, "is worth 50,000 francs?"

"It is, without the setting, which is also valuable," replied the abbe, as he closed the box, and returned it to his pocket, while its brilliant hues seemed still to dance before the eyes of the fascinated aubergiste.

"But how comes this diamond in your possession, M. l'Abbe? Did Edmond make you his heir?"

"No, merely his testamentary executor. When dying, the unfortunate youth said to me, 'I once possessed four dear and faithful friends, besides the maiden to whom I was betrothed; and I feel convinced they have all

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unfeignedly grieved over my loss. The name of one of the four friends I allude to is Caderousse.' "

The aubergiste shivered as though he felt the dead cold hand of the betrayed Edmond grasping his own.

"'Another of the number,' continued the abbe, without seeming to notice the emotion of Caderousse, 'is called Danglars, and the third, spite of being my rival, entertained a very sincere affection for me.' "

A fiendish smile played over the features of Caderousse, who was about to break in upon the abbe's speech, when the latter, waving his hand, said:

"Allow me to finish first, and then if you have any observations to make, you can do so afterwards.

"'The third of my friends, although my rival, was much attached to me—his name was Fernand, that of my betrothed was—' Stay, stay," continued the abbe, "I have forgotten what he called her."

"Mercedes!" said Caderousse, eagerly.

"True," said the abbe, with a stifled sigh, "Mercedes it was."

"Go on," urged Caderousse.

"Bring me a *carafe* of water," said the abbe.

Caderousse quickly performed the stranger's bidding; and after pouring some into a glass, and slowly swallowing its contents, the abbe resuming his usual placidity of manner, said, as he placed his empty glass on the table:

"Where did we leave off?"

"Oh, that the betrothed of Edmond was called Mercedes."

"To be sure. 'Well, then,' said Dantes—for, you understand, I repeat his words just as he uttered them—'you will go to Marseilles.' Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

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"'For the purpose of selling this diamond; the produce of which you will divide into five equal parts, and give an equal portion to the only persons who have loved me upon earth."

"But why into five parts?" asked Caderousse, "you only mentioned four persons."

"Because the fifth is dead, as I hear. The fifth sharer in Edmond's bequest was his own father."

"Too true, too true!" ejaculated Caderousse, almost suffocated by the contending passions which assailed him. "The poor old man did die."

"I learned so much at Marseilles," replied the abbe, making a strong effort to appear indifferent; "but from the length of time that has elapsed since the death of the elder Dantes, I was unable to obtain any particulars of his end. You possibly may be capable of furnishing me with such minute circumstances as may serve to substantiate the decease of the elder Dantes.

"I do not know who could if I could not," said Caderousse. "Why, I lived almost on the same floor with the poor old man. Ah, yes! about a year after the disappearance of his son, the old man died!"

"Of what did he die?

"Why, the doctors called his complaint an internal inflammation, I believe; his acquaintances said he died of grief; but I, who saw him in his dying moments, I say he died of——"

"Of what?" asked the priest, anxiously and eagerly.

"Why, of downright starvation."

"Starvation!" exclaimed the abbe, springing from his seat. "Why, the vilest animals are not suffered to die by such a death as that. The very dogs that wander houseless and homeless in the streets find some pitying hand to cast them a mouthful of bread; and

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that a man, a Christian, should be allowed to perish of hunger in the midst of other men equally Christians with himself, is too horrible for belief. Oh, it is impossible—utterly impossible."

"What I have said, I have said," answered Caderousse.

"And you are a fool for having said anything about it," said a voice from the top of the stairs. "Why should you meddle with what does not concern you?"

The two male speakers turned round quickly, and perceived the sickly countenance of La Carconte leaning over the rail of the staircase. Attracted by the sound of voices, she had feebly dragged herself down the stairs, and seated on the lower step, she had listened to the foregoing conversation.

"Mind your own business, wife," replied Caderousse, sharply. "This gentleman asks me for information which common politeness will not permit me to refuse."

"Politeness! you simpleton!" retorted La Carconte. "What have you to do with politeness, I should like to know? Better study a little common prudence. How do you know the motives that person may have for trying to extract all he can from you?"

"I pledge you my sacred word, madame," said the abbe, "that my intentions are free from all thoughts of harm or injury to you or yours; and that your husband can incur no risk provided he answers me candidly."

"Ah, that's all very fine," retorted the woman. "Nothing is easier than to begin with fair promises and assurances of nothing to fear; but when poor silly folks like my husband there have been persuaded to tell all they know, the promises and assurances of safety are quickly forgotten; and at some moment when no-

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body is expecting it, behold trouble, and misery, and all sorts of persecutions are heaped on the unfortunate wretches, who cannot even see whence all their afflictions come."

"Nay, nay, my good woman, make yourself perfectly easy, I beg of you. Whatever evils may befall you, they will not be occasioned by my instrumentality, that I solemnly promise you."

Some inarticulate sounds escaped La Carconte, then letting her head, which she had raised during the excitement of the conversation, again droop on to her lap, she commenced her usual aguish trembling, the result of her feverish attack, leaving the two speakers to resume the conversation, but still remaining herself so placed as to be able to hear every word they uttered.

Again the abbe had been obliged to swallow a draught of water to calm the emotions that threatened to overpower him. When he had sufficiently recovered himself, he said:

"It appears, then, that the miserable old man you were telling me of was forsaken by every one. Surely had not such been the case, he would not have perished by so dreadful a death as you described."

"Why, he was not altogether forsaken," continued Caderousse; "for Mercedes, the Catalan, and M. Morrel, were very kind to him: but somehow the poor old man had contracted a profound hatred of Fernand—the very person," added Caderousse, with a bitter smile, "that you named just now as being one of Dantes' faithful and attached friends."

"And was he not so?" asked the abbe.

"Gaspard! Gaspard!" murmured the woman, from her seat on the stairs, "mind what you are saying!"

Caderousse made no reply to these words, though evi-

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dently irritated and annoyed by the interruption, but, addressing the abbe, said:

"Can a man be faithful to another whose wife he covets and desires for himself? But Dantes was so honorable and true in his own nature, that he believed everybody's profession of friendship. Poor Edmond! he was cruelly deceived; but it was a happy thing he never knew it, or he might have found it more difficult, when on his death-bed, to pardon his enemies. And, whatever people may say," continued Caderousse, in his native language, which was not altogether devoid of rude poetry, "I cannot help being more frightened at the idea of the malediction of the dead than the hatred of the living."

"Weak-minded coward!" exclaimed La Carconte.

"Do you then know in what manner Fernand injured Dantes?" inquired the abbe of Caderousse.

"Do I? No one better."

"Speak out, then; say what it was."

"Gaspard!" cried La Carconte, "I cannot coerce you to do otherwise than as you please, but, if you are guided by me, you will have nothing to say on this subject."

"Well, well, wife," replied Caderousse, "I do not know but what you are right! I shall follow your advice."

"Then you are determined not to reveal the circumstances you allude to?" said the abbe.

"Why, what good would it do?" asked Caderousse. "If the poor lad were living, and came to me to beg I would candidly tell which were his true and which were his false friends, why, perhaps, I should not hesitate. But you tell me he is no more, and therefore can have nothing to do with hatred or revenge; so let all such feelings be buried with him."

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"You prefer, then," said the abbe, "allowing me to bestow on men you say are false and treacherous, the reward intended for faithful friendship?"

"That is true enough," returned Caderousse. "You say truly the gift of poor Edmond was not meant for such traitors as Fernand and Danglars; besides, what would it be to them? no more than a drop of water in the ocean."

"And, remember, husband," chimed in La Carconte, "that to breathe one syllable against those two individuals would be to raise up against yourself two formidable enemies, who at a word would level you with the dust!"

"How so?" inquired the abbe. "Are these persons, then, so rich and powerful?"

"Do you not know their history?"

"I do not. Pray relate it to me."

Caderousse seemed to reflect for a few instants, then said,—

"No, truly, it would take up too much time."

"Well, my good friend," returned the abbe, in a tone that indicated utter indifference on his part, "you are at liberty either to speak or be silent, as you please; for my own part, I respect your scruples and admire your sentiments. So let the matter end. I shall do my duty as conscientiously as I can, and fulfil my promise to the dying man. My first business will be to dispose of this diamond."

So saying, the abbe again drew the small box from his pocket, opened it, and contrived to hold it in such a light that a bright flash of brilliant hues passed before the dazzled gaze of Caderousse.

"Wife, wife!" cried he, in a voice almost hoarse with eager emotion, "come hither and behold this rich diamond!"

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"Diamond!" exclaimed La Carconte, rising and descending to the chamber with a tolerably firm step; "what diamond are you talking about?"

"Why, did you not hear all we said?" inquired Caderousse. "It is a beautiful diamond left by poor Edmond Dantes, to be sold, and the money to be divided among his father, Mercedes, his betrothed bride, Fernand, and myself. The jewel is worth at least fifty thousand francs."

"Oh, what a splendid diamond!" cried the astonished woman.

"The fifth part of the produce of this stone belongs to us, then, does it not?" asked Caderousse, still devouring the glittering gem with his eyes.

"It does," replied the abbe, "with the addition of an equal division of that part intended for the elder Dantes, which I conceive myself at liberty to share equally with the four surviving persons."

"And wherefore among us four?" inquired Caderousse.

"As being the friends Edmond esteemed most faithful and devoted to him."

"I don't call those friends who betray and ruin you," murmured the wife, in her turn, in a low, muttering voice.

"Of course not!" rejoiced Caderousse, quickly, "no more do I; and that was what I was observing to this gentleman just now. I said I looked upon it as a sacrilegious profanation to reward treachery, perhaps crime."

"Remember," answered the abbe calmly, as he replaced the jewel and its case in the pocket of his cassock, "it is your fault, not mine, if I do so. You will have the goodness to furnish me with the address of

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both Fernand and Danglars, in order that I may execute Edmond's last wishes."

The agitation of Caderousse became extreme, and large drops of perspiration dropped from his heated brows. As he saw the abbe rise from his seat and go towards the door, as though to ascertain if his horse were sufficiently refreshed to continue his journey, Caderousse and his wife exchanged looks of deep meaning with each other.

"There, you see, wife," said the former, "this splendid diamond might all be ours if we chose!"

"Do you believe it?"

"Why, surely, a man of his holy profession would not deceive us!"

"Well," replied La Carconte, "do as you like. For my part I wash my hands of the affair."

So saying, she once more climbed the staircase leading to her chamber, her frame shuddering with anguish chills, and her teeth rattling in her head, spite of the intense heat of the weather. Arrived at the top stair, she turned round, and called out in a warning tone to her husband,—

"Gaspard, consider well what you are about to do."

"I have both reflected and decided," answered he.

La Carconte then entered her chamber, the flooring of which creaked beneath her heavy, uncertain tread, as she proceeded towards her arm-chair, into which she fell as though exhausted.

"Well," asked the abbe, as he returned to the apartment below, "what have you made up your mind to do?"

"To tell you all I know," was the reply.

"I certainly think you act wisely in so doing," said the priest. "Not because I have the least desire to learn anything you may desire to conceal from me, but

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simply that if, through your assistance, I could distribute the legacy according to the wishes of the testator, why so much the better, that is all."

"I trust, indeed, such will be the case, and that poor Edmond's dying bequest will be given only to such as you are convinced are his faithful and attached friends," replied Caderousse, his eyes sparkling and his face flushed with the hope of obtaining all himself.

"Now, then, begin, if you please," said the abbe, "I am all attention."

"Stop a minute," answered Caderousse, "we might be interrupted in the most interesting part of my recital, which would be a pity, and it is as well that your visit here should be made known only to ourselves."

With these words he went stealthily to the door, which he closed, and by way of still greater precaution bolted and barred it as he was accustomed to do at night. During this time the abbe had chosen his place for listening to the painful recital he expected Caderousse's would prove; he removed his seat into a corner of the room, where he himself would be in deep shadow, while the light would be fully thrown on the narrator; then, with head bent down and hands clasped or rather clenched together, he prepared to give his whole attention to Caderousse, who seated himself on the little stool, exactly opposite to him.

"Remember I did not urge you to this," said the trembling voice of La Carconte, as though, through the flooring of her chamber, she viewed the scene that was enacting below.

"Enough, enough!" replied Caderousse, "say no more about it; I will take all the consequences upon myself."

He then commenced as follows:

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RECITAL.

"First," said Caderousse, "sir, you must make me a promise."

"What is that?" inquired the abbe.

"Why, if ever you make use of the details I am about to give you, that you will never let any one know that it was I who supplied them, for the persons of whom I am about to talk are rich and powerful, and if they only laid the tips of their fingers on me, I should break to pieces like glass."

"Make yourself easy, my friend," replied the abbe; "I am a priest, and confessions die in my breast; recollect our only desire is to carry out in a fitting manner the last wishes of our friend. Speak, then, without reserve as without hatred; tell the truth, the whole truth; I do not know, never may know the persons of whom you are about to speak; besides, I am an Italian and not a Frenchman, and belong to God, and not to man, and I retire to my convent, which I have only quitted to fulfil the last wishes of a dying man."

This last assurance seemed to give Caderousse courage.

"Well, then, under these circumstances," said Caderousse, "I will; indeed I ought to undeceive you as to the friendship which poor Edmond believed so sincere and unquestionable."

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"Begin with his father, if you please," said the abbe; "Edmond talked to me a great deal about the old man, for whom he had the deepest love."

"The history is a sad one, sir," said Caderousse, shaking his head; "perhaps you know the earlier part of it?"

"Yes," answered the abbe. "Edmond related to me everything until the moment when he was arrested in a small cabaret close to Marseilles."

"At La Reserve! oh! yes! I can see it all before me this moment."

"Was it not his betrothal feast?"

"It was; and the feast that began so gayly had a very sorrowful ending; a commissary of police, followed by four soldiers, entered, and Dantes was arrested."

"Yes, and up to this point I know all," said the priest. "Dantes himself only knew that which personally concerned him, for he never beheld again the five persons I have named to you, nor heard mention of any one of them."

"Well, when Dantes was arrested, M. Morrel hastened to obtain the particulars, and they were very sad. The old man returned alone to his home, folded up his wedding suit with tears in his eyes, and paced up and down his chamber the whole day, and would not go to bed at all, for I was underneath him and heard him walking the whole night; and for myself, I assure you I could not sleep either, for the grief of the poor father gave me great uneasiness, and every step he took went to my heart as really as if his foot had pressed against my breast.

"The next day Mercedes came to implore protection of M. de Villefort; she did not obtain it, however, and went to visit the old man; when she saw him so miserable and heart-broken, having passed a sleepless night

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and not touched food since the previous day, she wished him to go with her, that she might take care of him; but the old man would not consent.

"'No,' was the old man's reply, 'I will not leave this house, for my poor dear boy loves me better than any thing in the world; and if he gets out of prison he will come and see me the first thing, and what would he think if I did not wait here for him?'

"I heard all this from the window, for I was anxious that Mercedes should persuade the old man to accompany her, for his footsteps over my head night and day did not leave me a moment for repose."

"But did you not go upstairs and try to console the poor old man?" asked the abbe.

"Ah! sir," replied Caderousse, "we cannot console those who will not be consoled, and he was one of these; besides, I know not why, but he seemed to dislike seeing me. One night, however, I heard his sobs, and I could not resist my desire to go up to him; but when I reached the door he was no longer weeping, but praying; I cannot now repeat to you, sir, all the eloquent words and imploring language he made use of: it was more than piety, it was more than grief; and I, who am no canter and hate the Jesuits, said then to myself, 'It is really well, and I am very glad that I have not any children, for if I were a father and felt such excessive grief as the old man does, and did not find in my memory or heart all he is now saying, I should throw myself into the sea at once, for I could not bear it.'"

"Poor father!" murmured the priest.

"From day to day he lived on alone, and more and more solitary. M. Morrel and Mercedes came to see him, and his door was closed, and although I was certain he was at home, he would not make any answer.

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One day when, contrary to his custom, he had admitted Mercedes, and the poor girl, in spite of her own grief and despair, endeavored to console him, he said to her:

"'Be assured, my dear daughter, he is dead; and instead of expecting him, it is he who is awaiting us; I am quite happy, for I am the oldest, and of course shall see him first.'

"However well disposed a person may be, why, you see, we leave off after a time seeing persons who are in sorrow, they make one melancholy; and so, at last, old Dantes was left all to himself, and I only saw from time to time strangers go up to him, and come down again with some bundle they tried to hide; but I guessed what these bundles were, and he sold by degrees what he had, to pay for his subsistence.

"At length, the poor old fellow reached the end of all he had; he owed three quarters' rent, and they threatened to turn him out; he begged for another week, which was granted to him. I know this because the landlord came into my apartment when he left his. For the first three days I heard him walking about as usual, but on the fourth I heard him no longer. I then resolved to go up to him at all risks. The door was closed, but I looked through the key-hole and saw him so pale and haggard that, believing him very ill, I went and told M. Morrel, and then ran on to Mercedes. They both came immediately, M. Morrel bringing a doctor, and the doctor said it was an affection of the stomach, and ordered him a limited diet. I was there too, and I never shall forget the old man's smile at this prescription. From that time he opened his door; he had an excuse for not eating any more, as the doctor had put him on a diet."

The abbe uttered a kind of groan.

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"The story interests you, does it not?" inquired Caderousse.

"Yes," replied the abbe, "it is very affecting."

"Mercedes came again, and she found him so altered that she was even more anxious than before to have him taken to her own abode. This was M. Morrel's wish also, who would fain have conveyed the old man against his consent; but the old man resisted and cried so, that they were actually frightened. Mercedes remained, therefore, by his bed-side, and M. Morrel went away, making a sign to the Catalan that he had left his purse on the chimney-piece. But availing himself of the doctor's order, the old man would not take any sustenance; at length (after nine days' despair and fasting), the old man died, cursing those who had caused his misery, and saying to Mercedes:

"'If ever you see my Edmond again, tell him I die blessing him.'"

The abbe rose from his chair, made two turns round the chamber, and pressed his trembling hand against his parched throat.

"And you believe he died——"

"Of hunger, sir, of hunger," said Caderousse; "I am as certain of it as that we two are Christians."

The abbe with a shaking hand seized a glass of water that was standing by him half full, swallowed it at one gulp, and then resumed his seat with red eyes and pale cheeks.

"This was, indeed, a horrid event," said he, in a hoarse voice.

"The more so, sir, as it was men's and not God's doing."

"Tell me of those men," said the abbe, "and remember, too," he added, in a voice that was nearly menacing

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in its tone, "you have promised to tell me everything. Tell me, therefore, who are these men who have killed the son with despair, and the father with famine?"

"Two men jealous of him, sir; one from love, and the other ambition—Fernand and Danglars."

"Say, how was this jealousy manifested?"

"They denounced Edmond as a Bonapartist agent."

"Which of the two denounced him? which was the real delinquent?"

"Both, sir; one with a letter, and the other put it in the post."

"And where was this letter written?"

"At La Reserve, the day before the festival of the betrothing."

"Twas so then,—'twas so then," murmured the abbe, "Oh, Faria! Faria! how well did you judge men and things!"

"What did you please to say, sir?" asked Caderousse.

"Nothing, nothing," replied the priest; "go on."

"It was Danglars who wrote the denunciation with his left hand, that his writing might not be recognized, and Fernand who put it in the post."

"But," exclaimed the abbe, suddenly, "you were there yourself."

"I!" said Caderousse, astonished, "who told you I was there?"

The abbe saw he had overshot the mark, and he added quickly:

"No one; but in order to have known everything so well, you must have been an eye-witness."

"True! true!" said Caderousse, in a choking voice, "I was there."

"And did you not remonstrate against such infamy?" asked the abbe; "if not, you were an accomplice."

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"Sir," replied Caderousse, "they had made me drink to such an excess that I nearly lost all perception. I had only an indistinct understanding of what was passing around me; I said all that a man in such a state could say; but they both assured me that it was a jest they were carrying on, and perfectly harmless."

"Next day—next day, sir, you must have seen plain enough what they had been doing, yet you said nothing, though you were present when Dantes was arrested."

"Yes, sir, I was there, and very anxious to speak; but Danglars restrained me.

"'If he should really be guilty,' said he, 'and did really put into the Isle of Elba; if he is really charged with a letter for the Bonapartist committee at Paris, and if they find this letter upon him, those who have supported him will pass for his accomplices.' I confess I had my fears in the state in which politics then were, and I held my tongue; it was cowardly, I confess, but it was not criminal."

"I comprehend; you allowed matters to take their course, that was all."

"Yes, sir," answered Caderousse, "and my remorse preys on me night and day. I often ask pardon of God, I swear to you, because this action, the only one with which I have seriously to reproach myself with in all my life, is no doubt the cause of my abject condition. I am expiating a moment of selfishness, and thus it is I always say to Carconte when she complains, 'Hold your tongue, woman, it is the will of God.'"

And Caderousse bowed his head with every sign of real repentance.

"Well, sir," said the abbe, "you have spoken unreservedly, and thus to accuse yourself is to deserve pardon."

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"Unfortunately, Edmond is dead, and has not pardoned me."

"He was ignorant," said the abbe.

"But he knows it all now," interrupted Caderousse; "they say the dead know everything."

There was a brief silence; the abbe rose and paced up and down pensively, and then resumed his seat.

"You have two or three times mentioned a M. Morrel," he said; "who was he?"

"The owner of the 'Pharaoh' and patron of Dantes."

"And what part did he play in this sad drama?" inquired the abbe.

"The part of an honest man, full of courage and real regard. Twenty times he interceded for Edmond; when the emperor returned, he wrote, implored, threatened, and so energetically that, on the second restoration, he was persecuted as a Bonapartist. Ten times, as I told you, he came to see Dantes' father, and offered to receive him in his own house; and the night or two before his death, as I have already said, he left his purse on the mantel-piece, with which they paid the old man's debts and buried him decently. So Edmond's father died as he had lived, without doing harm to any one. I have the purse still by me, a large one made of red silk."

"And," asked the abbe, "is M. Morrel still alive?"

"Yes," replied Caderousse.

"In this case," replied the abbe, "he should be rich, and happy."

Caderousse smiled bitterly.

"Yes, happy as myself," said he.

"What! M. Morrel unhappy?" exclaimed the abbe.

"He is reduced almost to the last extremity—nay, he is almost on the point of dishonor."

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"How?"

"Yes," continued Caderousse, "and in this way, after five-and-twenty years of labor, after having acquired a most honorable name in the trade of Marseilles, M. Morrel is utterly ruined. He has lost five ships in two years, has suffered by the bankruptcy of three large houses, and his only hope is now in that very 'Pharaoh' which poor Dantes commanded, and which is expected from the Indies with a cargo of cochineal and indigo. If this ship founders like the others, he is a ruined man."

"And has the unfortunate man wife or children?" inquired the abbe.

"Yes, he has a wife, who, in all this, behaved like an angel; he has a daughter, who was about to marry the man she loved, but whose family now will not allow him to wed the daughter of a ruined man; he has besides a son, a lieutenant in the army, and, as you may suppose, all this, instead of soothing, doubles his grief. If he were alone in the world he would blow out his brains, and there would be an end."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the priest.

"And it is thus Heaven recompenses virtue, sir," added Caderousse. "You see, I, that never did a bad action but that I told you of, I am in destitution; after having seen my poor wife die of a fever, unable to do anything in the world for her, I shall die of hunger, as old Dantes did, whilst Fernand and Danglars are rolling in wealth."

"How is that?"

"Because all their malpractices have turned to luck, whilst honest men have been reduced to misery."

"What has become of Danglars, the instigator, and therefore the most guilty?"

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"What has become of him? Why, he left Marseilles, and was taken, on the recommendation of M. Morrel, who did not know his crime, as cashier in a Spanish bank. During the war with Spain, he was employed in the commissariat of the French army, and made a fortune; then with that money he speculated in the funds, and trebled or quadrupled his capital; and, having first married his banker's daughter, who left him a widower, he has married a second time, a widow, a Madame de Nargonne, daughter of M. de Servieux, the king's chamberlain, who is in high favor at court. He is a millionaire, and they have made him a count, and now he is Le Comte Danglars, with a hotel in the Rue de Mont Blanc, with ten horses in his stables, six footmen in his antechamber, and I know not how many hundreds of thousands in his strong box."

"Ah!" said the abbe, with a peculiar tone, "he is happy."

"Happy! who can answer for that? Happiness or unhappiness is the secret known but to one's-self, and the walls—walls have ears, but no tongue—but if a large fortune produces happiness, Danglars is happy."

"And Fernand?"

"Fernand! why, that is another history."

"But how could a poor Catalan fisher-boy, without education and resources, make a fortune? I confess this staggers me."

"And it has staggered everybody. There must have been in his life some strange secret no one knows."

"But then, by what visible steps has he attained this high fortune or high position?"

"Both, sir; he has both fortune and position, both."

"This must be impossible."

"It would seem so, but listen and you will understand.

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Some days before the return of the emperor, Fernand was drawn in the conscription. The Bourbons left him quietly enough at the Catalans, but Napoleon returned, an extraordinary muster was determined on, and Fernand was compelled to join. I went, too, but, as I was older than Fernand, and had just married my poor wife, I was only sent to the coast. Fernand was enrolled in the active troop, went to the frontier with his regiment, and was at the battle of Ligny. The night after that battle he was sentry at the door of a general who carried on a secret correspondence with the enemy. That same night the general was to go over to the English. He proposed to Fernand to accompany him; Fernand agreed to do so, deserted his post and followed the general.

"That which would have brought Fernand to a court-martial if Napoleon remained on the throne, served for his recommendation to the Bourbons. He returned to France with the epaulette of sub-lieutenant, and, as the protection of the general, who is in the highest favor, was accorded to him, he was a captain in 1823, during the Spanish war—that is to say, at the time when Danglars made his early speculations. Fernand was a Spaniard, and being sent to Spain to ascertain the feeling of his fellow-countrymen, found Danglars there, became on very intimate terms with him, procured his general support from the royalists of the capital and the provinces, received promises and made pledges on his own part, guided his regiment by paths known to himself alone in gorges of the mountains kept by the royalists, and, in fact, rendered such services in his brief campaign that, after the taking of Trocadero, he was made colonel, and received the title of count and the cross of an officer of the Legion of Honor."

"Destiny! destiny!" murmured the abbe.

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"Yes, but listen; this was not all. The war with Spain being ended, Fernand's career was checked by the long peace which seemed likely to endure throughout Europe. Greece only had risen against Turkey, and had begun her war of independence; all eyes were turned towards Athens—it was the fashion to pity and support the Greeks. The French government, without protecting them openly, as you know, tolerated partial migrations. Fernand sought and obtained leave to go and serve in Greece, still having his name kept in the ranks of the army. Some time after it was stated that the Comte de Morcerf, this was the name he bore, had entered the service of Ali Pacha, with the rank of instructor-general. Ali Pacha was killed, as you know, but before he died he recompensed the services of Fernand by leaving him a considerable sum, with which he returned to France, when his rank of lieutenant-general was confirmed."

"So that now—" inquired the abbe.

"So that now," continued Caderousse, "he possesses a magnificent hotel, No. 27 Rue de Helder, Paris."

The abbe opened his mouth, remained for a moment like a man who hesitates, then making an effort over himself, he said:

"And Mercedes, they tell me that she has disappeared?"

"Disappeared," said Caderousse, "yes, as the sun disappears, to rise the next day with still more splendor."

"Has she made a fortune also?" inquired the abbe, with an ironical smile.

"Mercedes is at this moment one of the greatest ladies in Paris," replied Caderousse.

"Go on," said the abbe, "it seems as if I were hearing the recital of a dream. But I have seen things so ex-

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traordinary that those you mention to me seem less astonishing."

"Mercedes was at first in the deepest despair at the blow which deprived her of Edmond. I have told you of her attempts to propitiate M. de Villefort, her devotion to the father of Dantes. In the midst of her despair a fresh trouble overtook her. This was the departure of Fernand, whose crime she did not know and whom she regarded as her brother. Fernand went and Mercedes remained alone. Three months passed and found her all tears; no news of Edmond, no news of Fernand; nothing before her, but an old man who was dying with despair. One evening, after having been seated, as was her custom, all day at the angle of two roads that lead to Marseilles from the Catalans, she returned to her home more depressed than ever; neither her lover nor her friend returned by either of these roads, and she had no intelligence of one or the other. Suddenly she heard a step she knew, turned round anxiously, the door opened, and Fernand, dressed in the uniform of a sub-lieutenant, stood before her. It was not the half of that she bewailed, but it was a portion of the past life that returned to her.

"Mercedes seized Fernand's hand with a transport which he took for love, but which was only joy at being no longer alone in the world, and seeing at last a friend after long hours of solitary sorrow. And then, it must be confessed, Fernand had never been hated, he was only not precisely loved. Another possessed all Mercedes' heart; that other was absent, had disappeared, perhaps was dead. At this last idea Mercedes burst into a flood of tears, and wrung her hands in agony; but this idea, which she had always repelled before, when it was suggested to her by another, came now in full force upon

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her mind; and then, too, old Dantes incessantly said to her, 'Our Edmond is dead; if he were not he would return to us.' The old man died, as I have told you; had he lived, Mercedes, perchance, had not become the wife of another, for he would have been there to reproach her infidelity. Fernand saw this, and when he learned the old man's death he returned. He was now a lieutenant. At his first coming he had not said a word of love to Mercedes; at the second he reminded her that he loved her. Mercedes begged for six months more to expect and bewail Edmond.

"So that," said the abbe, with a bitter smile, "that makes eighteen months in all; what more could the most devoted lover desire?"

Then he murmured the words of the English poet:

"'Frailty, thy name is woman.'"

"Six months afterwards," continued Caderousse, "the marriage took place in the church of Accoules."

"The very church in which she was to have married Edmond," murmured the priest; "there was only the change of bridegroom."

"Well, Mercedes was married," proceeded Caderousse, "but although in the eyes of the world she appeared calm, she nearly fainted as she passed La Reserve, where, eighteen months before, the betrothal had been celebrated with him whom she would have seen she still loved had she looked at the bottom of her heart. Fernand, more happy, but not more at his ease—for I saw at this time he was in constant dread of Edmond's return—Fernand was very anxious to get his wife away and to depart himself. There were too many dangers and recollections associated with the Catalans, and eight days after the wedding they left Marseilles."

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"Did you ever see Mercedes again?" inquired the priest.

"Yes, during the war of Spain, at Perpignan, where Fernand had left her: she was attending to the education of her son."

The abbe started.

"Her son?" said he.

"Yes," replied Caderousse, "little Albert."

"But, then, to be able to instruct her child," continued the abbe, "she must have received an education herself. I understood from Edmond that she was the daughter of a simple fisherman, beautiful, but uneducated."

"Oh!" replied Caderousse, "did he know so little of his lovely betrothed? Mercedes might have been a queen, sir, if the crown were to be placed on the heads of the loveliest and most intelligent. Fernand's fortune already became greater, and she became greater with his growing fortune. She learned drawing, music, everything. Besides, I believe, between ourselves, she did this in order to distract her mind, that she might forget, and she only filled her head thus in order to alleviate the weight on her heart. But now everything must be told," continued Caderousse; "no doubt, fortune and honors have comforted her. She is rich, a countess, and yet——"

Caderousse paused.

"Yet what?" asked the abbe.

"Yet, I am sure she is not happy," said Caderousse.

"What makes you believe this?"

"Why, when I have found myself very wretched, I have thought my old friends would perhaps assist me. So I went to Danglars, who would not even receive me. I called on Fernand, who sent me a hundred francs by his valet-de-chambre."

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"Then you did not see either of them?"

"No, but Madame de Morcerf saw me."

"How was that?"

"As I went away, a purse fell at my feet—it contained five-and-twenty louis; I raised my head quickly, and saw Mercedes, who shut the blind directly."

"And M. de Villefort?" asked the abbe.

"Oh! he was never a friend of mine; I did not know him, and I had nothing to ask of him.

"Do you not know what became of him, and the share he had in Edmond's misfortunes?"

"No. I only know that some time after having arrested him, he married Mademoiselle de Saint-Meran, and soon after left Marseilles; no doubt he had been as lucky as the rest, no doubt he is as rich as Danglars, as high in station as Fernand. I only, as you see, have remained poor, wretched, and forgotten!"

"You are mistaken, my friend," replied the abbe; "God may seem sometimes to forget for a while, whilst his justice reposes, but there always comes a moment when He remembers—and behold! a proof."

As he spoke the abbe took the diamond from his pocket, and giving it to Caderousse, said:

"Here, my friend, take this diamond; it is yours."

"What! for me only?" cried Caderousse; "ah! sir, do not jest with me!"

"This diamond was to have been shared amongst his friends. Edmond had one friend only, and thus it cannot be divided. Take the diamond, then, and sell it: it is worth fifty thousand francs (£2000), and I repeat my wish that the sum may suffice to release you from your wretchedness."

"Oh, sir," said Caderousse, putting out one hand timidly, and with the other wiping away the perspira-

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tion which bedewed his brow; "oh, sir, do not make a jest of the happiness or despair of a man!"

"I know what happiness and what despair are, and I never make a jest of such feelings. Take it, then; but in exchange——"

Caderousse, who touched the diamond, withdrew his hand.

The abbe smiled.

"In exchange," he continued, "give me the red silk purse that M. Morrel left on old Dantes' chimney-piece, and which you tell me is still in your hands."

Caderousse, more and more astonished, went towards a large oaken cupboard, opened it, and gave the abbe a long purse of faded red silk, round which were two copper runners that had once been gilt. The abbe took it, and in return gave Caderousse the diamond.

"Oh! you are a man of God, sir," cried Caderousse; "for no one knew that Edmond had given you this diamond, and you might have kept it."

"Which," said the abbe to himself, "you would have done."

The abbe rose, took his hat and gloves.

"Well," he said, "all you have told me is perfectly true, then, and I may believe it in every particular?"

"See, M. l'Abbe," replied Caderousse, "in this corner is a crucifix in holy wood—here on this shelf is the gospel of my wife; open this book and I will swear upon it with my hand on the crucifix; I will swear to you by my soul's salvation, my faith as a Christian, I have told everything to you as it occurred, and as the angel of men will tell it to the ear of God at the day of the last judgment!"

"'Tis well," said the abbe, convinced by his manner and tone that Caderousse spoke the truth. "'Tis well,

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and may this money profit you. Adieu! I go far from men who thus so bitterly injure each other."

The abbe with difficulty got away from the enthusiastic thanks of Caderousse, opened the door himself, got out and mounted his horse, once more saluted the innkeeper, who kept uttering his loud farewells, and then returned by the road he had travelled in coming. When Caderousse turned round he saw behind him La Carconte, paler and trembling more than ever.

"Is, then, all that I have heard really true?" she inquired.

"What! that he has given the diamond to us only?" inquired Caderousse, half bewildered with joy.

"Yes."

"Nothing more true! See, here it is."

The woman gazed at it a moment, and then said in a gloomy voice:

"Suppose it's false?"

Caderousse started and turned pale.

"False!" he muttered. "False! why should that man give me a false diamond?"

"To possess your secret without paying you for it, you blockhead!"

Caderousse remained for a moment aghast under the weight of such an idea.

"Oh!" he said taking up his hat, which he placed on the red handkerchief tied round his head, "we will soon learn that."

"In what way?"

"Why, it is the fair of Beaucaire, there are always jewellers from Paris there, and I shall show it to them. Take care of the house, wife, and I shall be back in two hours."

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Caderousse left the house in haste, and ran rapidly in a direction contrary to that which the unknown had taken.

"Fifty thousand francs!" muttered La Carconte, when left alone; "it is a large sum of money, but it is not a fortune."

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PRISON REGISTER.

THE day after that on which the scene had passed on the road betwen Bellegarde and Beaucaire we have just related, a man of about thirty or two-and-thirty, dressed in a bright blue frock-coat, nankeen trousers, and a white waistcoat, having the appearance and accent of an Englishman, presented himself before the mayor of Marseilles.

"Sir," said he, "I am chief clerk of the house of Thomson & French, of Rome. We are, and have been these ten years, connected with the house of Morrel & Son, of Marseilles. We have a hundred thousand francs (£4000), or thereabouts, engaged in speculation with them, and we are a little uneasy at reports that have reached us that the firm is on the eve of ruin. I have come, therefore, express from Rome, to ask you for information as to this house."

"Sir," replied the mayor, "I know very well that during the last four or five years misfortune seems to pursue M. Morrel. He has lost four or five vessels and suffered by three bankruptcies; but it is not for me, although I am a creditor myself to the amount of ten thousand francs (£400), to give any information as to the state of his finances. Ask of me, as mayor, what is my opinion of M. Morrel, I shall say he is a man

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honorable to the last degree, and who has up to this time fulfilled every engagement with scrupulous punctuality. This is all I can say, sir; if you wish to learn more, address yourself to M. de Boville, the Inspector of Prisons, No. 15 Rue de Nouailles; he has, I believe, two hundred thousand francs placed in the hands of Morrel, and if there be any grounds of apprehension, as this is a greater amount than mine, you will most probably find him better informed than myself."

The Englishman seemed to appreciate this extreme delicacy, made his bow and went away, walking with that step peculiar to the sons of Great Britain, towards the street mentioned. M. de Boville was in his private room, and the Englishman, on perceiving him, made a gesture of surprise, which seemed to indicate that it was not the first time he had been in his presence. As to M. de Boville, he was in such a state of despair that it was evident all the faculties of his mind, absorbed in the thought which occupied him at the moment, did not allow either his memory or his imagination to stray to the past. The Englishman, with the coolness of his nation, addressed him in terms nearly similar to those with which he had accosted the mayor of Marseilles.

"Oh, sir," exclaimed M. Boville, "your fears are unfortunately but too well founded, and you see before you a man in despair. I had two hundred thousand francs placed in the hands of Morrel & Son; these two hundred thousand francs were my daughter's dowry, who was to be married in a fortnight, and these two hundred thousand francs were payable, half on the 15th of this month, and the other half on the 15th of next month. I had informed M. Morrel of my desire to have these payments punctually, and he has been within the last half hour to tell me that if his ship, the 'Pharaoh,'

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did not come into port on the 15th he would be wholly unable to make this payment."

"But," said the Englishman, "this looks very much like a suspension of payments!"

"Say, sir, that it resembles a bankruptcy!" said M. de Boville, despairingly.

The Englishman appeared to reflect a moment, and then said:

"Thus, then, sir, this credit inspires you with considerable apprehensions?"

"To say the truth, I consider it lost."

"Well, then, I will buy it of you."

"You?"

"Yes, I!"

"But at a tremendous discount, of course?"

"No, for two hundred thousand francs. Our house," added the Englishman, with a laugh, "does not do things in that way."

"And you will pay——"

"Ready money."

And the Englishman drew from his pocket a bundle of bank-notes, which might have been twice the amount that M. de Boville feared to lose. A ray of joy passed across M. de Boville's countenance, yet he made an effort over himself, and said:

"Sir, I ought to tell you that, in all probability, you will not have six per cent. of this sum."

"That's no affair of mine," replied the Englishman, "that is the affair of the house of Thomson & French, in whose name I act. They have, perhaps, some motive to serve in hastening the ruin of a rival firm. But all I know, sir, is, that I am ready to hand you over this sum in exchange for your assignment of the debt. I only ask a brokerage."

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"Of course that is perfectly just," cried M. de Boville. "The commission is usually one and a half; you will have two—three—five per cent., or even more? Say!"

"Sir," replied the Englishman laughing, "I am like my house and do not do such things—no, the commission I ask is quite different."

"Name it, sir, I beg."

"You are the inspector of prisons?"

"I have been so these fourteen years."

"You keep the register of entries and departures?"

"I do."

"To these registers there are notes relative to prisoners?"

"There are special reports on every prisoner."

"Well, sir, I was educated at Rome by a poor devil of an abbe, who disappeared suddenly. I since learned that he was confined in the Chateau d'If, and I should like to learn some particulars of his death."

"What was his name?"

"The Abbe Faria."

"Oh, I recollect him perfectly," cried M. de Boville, "he was crazy."

"So they said."

"Oh, he was, decidedly."

"Very possibly, but what sort of madness was it?"

"He pretended to know of an immense treasure, and offered vast sums to the government if they would liberate him."

"Poor devil! and he is dead?"

"Yes, sir; five or six months ago last February."

"You have a good memory, sir, to recollect dates so well!"

"I recollect this, because the poor devil's death was accompanied by a singular circumstance."

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"May I ask what that was?" said the Englishman, with an expression of curiosity which a close observer would have been astonished at discovering in his phlegmatic countenance.

"Oh, dear, yes, sir; the abbe's dungeon was forty or fifty feet distant from that of an old agent of Bonaparte's—one of those who had the most contributed to the return of the usurper in 1815."

"Indeed!" said the Englishman.

"Yes," replied M. de Boville; "I myself had occasion to see this man in 1816 or 1817, and we could only go into his dungeon with a file of soldiers; that man made a deep impression on me; I shall never forget his countenance!"

The Englishman smiled imperceptibly.

"And you say, sir," he said, "that the two dungeons——"

"Were separated by a distance of fifty feet; but it appears that this Edmond Dantes——"

"This dangerous man's name was——"

"Edmond Dantes. It appears, sir, that this Edmond Dantes had procured tools, or made them, for they found a passage by which the prisoners communicated."

"This passage was formed, no doubt, with an intention of escape?"

"No doubt; but unfortunately for the prisoners, the abbe had an attack of catalepsy, and died."

"That must have cut short the projects of escape."

"For the dead man, yes," replied M. de Boville, "but not for the survivor: on the contrary, this Dantes saw means of accelerating his escape. He, no doubt, thought that prisoners who died in the Chateau d'If were interred in a burial-ground as usual, and he conveyed the dead man into his own cell, assumed his place in the

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sack in which they had sewn up the defunct, and awaited the moment of interment."

"It was a bold step, and one that indicated some courage," remarked the Englishman.

"As I have already told you, sir, he was a very dangerous man; and fortunately, by his own act, disembarrassed the government of the fears they had on his account."

"How was that?"

"How? do you not comprehend?"

"No."

"The Chateau d'If has no cemetery, and they simply throw the dead into the sea after having fastened a thirty-six pound bullet to their feet."

"Well?" observed the Englishman, as if he were slow of comprehension.

"Well, they fastened a thirty-six pound bullet to his feet and threw him into the sea."

"Really!" exclaimed the Englishman.

"Yes, sir," continued the inspector of prisons. "You may imagine the amazement of the fugitive when he found himself flung headlong beneath the rocks! I should like to have seen his face at that moment."

"That would have been difficult."

"No matter," replied De Boville, in supreme good-humor at the certainty of recovering his two hundred thousand francs—"no matter, I can fancy it."

And he shouted with laughter.

"So can I," said the Englishman, and he laughed too; but he laughed as the English do, at the end of his teeth.

"And so," continued the Englishman, who first regained his composure, "he was drowned?"

"Unquestionably."

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"So that the governor got rid of the fierce and crazy prisoner at the same time?"

"Precisely."

"But some official document was drawn up as to this affair, I suppose?" inquired the Englishman.

"Yes, yes, the mortuary deposition. You understand, Dantes' relations, if he had any, might have some interest in knowing if he were dead or alive."

"So that now, if there were anything to inherit from him, they may do so with easy conscience. He is dead, and no mistake about it?"

"Oh yes; and they may have the fact attested whenever they please."

"So be it," said the Englishman. "But to return to these registers."

"True, this story has diverted our attention from them. Excuse me."

"Excuse you for what? for the story? By no means, it really seems to me very curious."

"Yes, indeed. So, sir, you wish to see all relating to the poor abbe, who really was gentleness itself."

"Yes, you will much oblige me."

"Go into my study here, and I will show it to you."

And they both entered M. de Boville's study.

All was here arranged in perfect order; each register had its number, each file of paper its place. The inspector begged the Englishman to seat himself in an arm-chair, and placed before him the register and documents relative to the Chateau d'If, giving him all the time he desired to examine it, whilst De Boville seated himself in a corner, and began to read his newspaper.

The Englishman easily found the entries relative to the Abbe Faria; but it seemed that the history which the inspector had related interested him greatly; for,

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after having perused the first documents, he turned over the leaves until he reached the deposition respecting Edmond Dantes. There he found everything arranged in due order—the denunciation, examination, Morrel's petition, M. de Villefort's marginal notes. He folded up the denunciation quietly, and put it as quietly in his pocket; read the examination, and saw that the name of Noirtier was not mentioned in it; perused, too, the application, dated 10th April, 1815, in which Morrel, by the deputy procureur's advice, exaggerated with the best intentions (for Napoleon was then on the throne) the services Dantes had rendered to the imperial cause —services which Villefort's certificates rendered indispensable. Then he saw through all. This petition to Napoleon, kept back by Villefort, had become, under the second restoration, a terrible weapon against him in the hands of the procureur du roi. He was no longer astonished when he searched on to find in the register this note placed in a bracket against his name:

EDMOND DANTES, { An inveterate Bonapartist; took an active part in the return from the Isle of Elba. To be kept in complete confinement, and to be strictly watched and guarded.

Beneath these lines was written in another hand:

"See note above—nothing can be done."

He compared the writing in the bracket with the writing of the certificate placed beneath Morrel's petition, and discovered that the note in the bracket was the same writing as the certificate—that is to say, were in Villefort's handwriting.

As to the note which accompanied this, the Englishman understood that it might have been added by some inspector, who had taken a momentary interest in Dantes' situation, but who had, from the remarks we

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have quoted, found it impossible to give any effect to the interest he experienced.

As we have said, the inspector, from discretion, and that he might not disturb the Abbe Faria's pupil in his researches, had seated himself in a corner, and was reading "Le Drapeau Blanc."

He did not see the Englishman fold up and place in his pocket the denunciation written by Danglars under the arbor of La Reserve, and which had the post-mark of Marseilles, 2d March, delivery 6 o'clock P.M.

But it must be said that if he had seen it he attached so small importance to this scrap of paper and so great importance to his 200,000 francs, that he would not have opposed what the Englishman did, how incorrect soever it might be.

"Thanks!" said the latter, closing the register with a noise, "I have all I want; now it is for me to perform my promise. Give me a simple assignment of your debt, acknowledge therein the receipt of the cash, and I will hand you over the money."

He rose, gave his seat to M. de Boville, who took it without ceremony, and quickly drew out the required assignment, whilst the Englishman was counting out the bank-notes on the other side of the desk.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HOUSE OF MORREL & SON.

ANY one who had quitted Marseilles a few years previously well acquainted with the interior of Morrel's house, and had returned at this date, would have found a great change.

Instead of that air of life, of comfort, and of happiness that exhales from a flourishing and prosperous house—instead of the merry faces seen at the windows, of the busy clerks hurrying to and fro in the long corridors—instead of the court filled with bales of goods, re-echoing the cries and the jokes of the porters, he would have at once perceived an air of sadness and gloom. In the deserted corridor and the empty office, out of all the numerous clerks that used to fill the office, but two remained. One was a young man of three or four and twenty, who was in love with M. Morrel's daughter and had remained with him, spite of the efforts of his friends to induce him to withdraw; the other was an old one-eyed cashier, named Cocles, a nickname given him by the young men who used to inhabit this vast beehive, now almost deserted, and which had so completely replaced his real name that he would not, in all probability, have replied to any one who addressed himself by it.

Cocles remained in M. Morrel's service, and a most

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singular change had taken place in his situation; he had at the same time risen to the rank of cashier and sunk to the rank of a servant. He was, however, the same Cocles, good, patient, devoted, but inflexible on the subject of arithmetic, the only point on which he would have stood firm against the world, even against M. Morrel; and strong in the multiplication-table, which he had at his fingers' ends, no matter what scheme or what trap was laid to catch him. In the midst of the distress of the house, Cocles was the only one unmoved. But this did not arise from a want of affection, but, on the contrary, from a firm conviction, like the rats that leave by degrees the vessel doomed to perish at sea; so that these egotistical guests have completely abandoned the ship at the moment when the vessel weighs anchor. So all these numerous clerks had by degrees deserted the bureaus and warehouse. Cocles had seen them go without thinking of inquiring the cause of their departure: everything was, as we have said, a question of arithmetic to Cocles, and during twenty years he had always seen all payments made with such exactitude, that it seemed as impossible to him that the house should stop payment as it would to a miller that the river that had so long turned his mill should cease to flow.

Nothing had as yet occurred to shake Cocles' belief; the last month's payment had been made with the most scrupulous exactitude; Cocles had detected an error of fourteen sous to the prejudice of Morrel, and the same evening he had brought them to M. Morrel, who, with a melancholy smile, threw them into an almost empty drawer, saying:

"Thanks, Cocles, you are the pearl of cashiers."

Cocles retired perfectly happy, for this eulogium from M. Morrel, himself the pearl of the honest men of Mar-

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seilles, flattered him more than a present of 1000 francs. But since the end of the month M. Morrel had passed many an anxious hour. In order to meet the end of the month he had collected all his resources, and, fearing lest the report of his distress should be bruited abroad at Marseilles when he was known to be reduced to such an extremity, he went to the fair of Beaucaire to sell his wife's and daughter's jewels and a portion of his plate. By this means the end of the month was passed, but his resources were now exhausted. Credit, owing to the reports afloat, was no longer to be had; and to meet the 100,000 francs due on the 15th of the present month to M. de Boville, and 100,000 due on the 15th of the next month, M. Morrel had, in reality, no hope but the return of the "Pharaoh," whose departure he had learnt from a vessel which had weighed anchor at the same time and which had already arrived in harbor.

But this vessel, which like the "Pharaoh" came from Calcutta, had arrived a fortnight, whilst no intelligence had been received of the "Pharaoh."

Such was the state of things when, the day after his interview with M. de Boville, the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson & French, of Rome, presented himself at M. Morrel's. Emmanuel received him; the young man whom every fresh visage alarmed, for each fresh visage announced a fresh creditor, who in his alarm came to question the head of the house. The young man, wishing to spare his employer the pain of this interview, questioned the new-comer; but the stranger declared he had nothing to say to M. Emmanuel, and that his business was with M. Morrel in person.

Emmanuel sighed, and summoned Cocles. Cocles appeared, and the young man bade him conduct the stranger to M. Morrel's apartment. Cocles went first,

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and the stranger followed him. On the staircase they met a beautiful girl, of sixteen or seventeen, who looked with anxiety at the stranger.

"M. Morrel is in his room, is he not, Mademoiselle Julie?" said the cashier.

"Yes; I think so, at least," said the young girl hesitatingly. "Go and see, Cocles, and if my father is there, announce this gentleman."

"It will be useless to announce me, mademoiselle," returned the Englishman. "M. Morrel does not know my name; this worthy gentleman has only to announce the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson & French, of Rome, with whom your father does business."

The young girl turned pale, and continued to descend, whilst the stranger and Cocles continued to mount the staircase. She entered the office where Emmanuel was, while Cocles, by the aid of a key he possessed, opened a door in the corner of the landing-place on the second staircase, conducted the stranger into an antechamber, opened a second door, which he closed behind him, and after having left the clerk of the house of Thomson & French alone, returned and signed to him to enter.

The Englishman entered, and found Morrel seated at a table, turning over the formidable columns of his ledger, which contained the list of his liabilities. At the sight of the stranger M. Morrel closed the ledger, rose, and offered a seat to him, and when he had seen him seated resumed his own chair.

Fourteen years had changed the worthy merchant, who, in his thirty-sixth year at the opening of this history, was now in his fiftieth; his hair had turned white, time and sorrow had ploughed deep furrows on his brow, and his look, once so firm and penetrating, was

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now irresolute and wandering, as if he feared being forced to fix his attention on an idea or a man. The Englishman looked at him with an air of curiosity, evidently mingled with interest.

"Monsieur," said Morrel, whose uneasiness was increased by this examination, "you wish to speak to me."

"Yes, monsieur: you are aware from whom I come?"

"The house of Thomson & French; at least, so my cashier tells me."

"He has told you rightly. The house of Thomson & French had 300,000 or 400,000 francs (£12,000 to £16,000) to pay this month in France, and, knowing your strict punctuality, have collected all the bills bearing your signature, and charged me as they become due to present them and to employ the money otherwise."

Morrel sighed deeply and passed his hand over his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"So then, sir," said Morrel, "you hold bills of mine?"

"Yes, and for a considerable sum."

"What is the amount?" asked Morrel, with a voice he strove to render firm.

"Here is," said the Englishman, taking a quantity of papers from his pocket, "an assignment of 200,000 francs to our house by M. de Boville, the inspector of prisons, to whom they are due. You acknowledge, of course, you owe this sum to him?"

"Yes; he placed the money in my hands at four and a half per cent., nearly five years ago."

"When are you to pay?"

"Half the 15th of this month, half the 15th of next."

"Just so: and now here are 32,500 francs payable shortly; they are all signed by you and assigned to our house by the holders."

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"I recognize them," said Morrel, whose face was suffused as he thought that for the first time in his life he would be unable to honor his own signature. "Is this all?"

"No: I have for the end of the month these bills, which have been assigned to us by the house of Pascal and the house of Wild & Turner, of Marseilles, amounting to nearly 55,000 francs (£2209): in all, 287,500 francs (£11,500).

It is impossible to describe what Morrel suffered during this enumeration.

"Two hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred francs," repeated he.

"Yes, sir," replied the Englishman.

"I will not," continued he, after a moment's silence, "conceal from you, that whilst your probity and exactitude up to this moment are universally acknowledged, yet the report is current in Marseilles that you are not able to meet your engagements."

At this almost brutal speech Morrel turned deathly pale.

"Sir," said he, "up to this time, and it is now more than four-and-twenty years since I received the direction of this house from my father, who had himself conducted it for five-and-thirty years—never has anything bearing the signature of Morrel & Son been dishonored."

"I know that," replied the Englishman. "But as a man of honor should answer another, tell me fairly, shall you pay these with the same punctuality?"

Morrel shuddered, and looked at the man, who spoke with more assurance than he had hitherto shown.

"To questions frankly put," said he, "a straightforward answer should be given. Yes, I shall pay, if, as I hope, my vessel arrives safely: for its arrival will

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again procure me the credit which the numerous accidents, of which I have been the victim, have deprived me; but if the 'Pharaoh' should be lost, and this last resource be gone——"

The poor man's eyes filled with tears.

"Well," returned Morrel, "it is a cruel thing to be forced to say, but, already used to misfortune, I must habituate myself to shame. I fear I shall be forced to suspend my payments."

"Have you no friends who could assist you?"

Morrel smiled mournfully.

"In business, sir," said he, "one has no friends, only correspondents."

"It is true," murmured the Englishman: "then you have but one hope?"

"But one."

"The last?"

"The last."

"So that if this fail——"

"I am ruined, completely!"

"As I came here, a vessel was entering port."

"I know it, sir; a young man, who still adheres to my fallen fortunes, passes a part of his time in a belvedere at the top of the house, in hopes of being the first to announce good news to me; he has informed me of the entrance of this ship."

"And it is not yours?"

"No; it is a vessel of Bordeaux, 'La Gironde'; it comes from India also, but it is not mine."

"Perhaps it has spoken the 'Pharaoh,' and brings you some tidings of it?"

"Shall I tell you plainly one thing, sir? I dread almost as much to receive any tidings of my vessel as to remain in doubt. Incertitude is still hope."

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Then in a low voice, Morrel added.

"This delay is not natural. The 'Pharaoh' left Calcutta the 5th of February; it ought to have been here a month ago."

"What is that?" said the Englishman. "What is the meaning of this noise?"

"Oh! oh!" cried Morrel, turning pale; "what is this?"

A loud noise was heard on the stair, of people moving hastily, and half-stifled sobs. Morrel rose, and advanced to the door; but his strength failed him, and he sank into a chair. The two men remained opposite one another, Morrel trembling in every limb, the stranger gazing at him with an air of profound pity. The noise had ceased; but it seemed that Morrel expected something—something had occasioned the noise, and something must follow.

The stranger fancied he heard footsteps on the stairs, and that the steps, which were those of several persons, stopped at the door. A key was inserted in the lock of the first door, and the creaking of hinges was audible.

"There are only two persons who have the key of the door," murmured Morrel, "Cocles and Julie."

At this instant the second door opened, and the young girl, her eyes bathed with tears, appeared.

Morrel rose tremblingly, supporting himself by the arm of the chair. He would have spoken, but his voice failed him.

"Oh, father!" said she, clasping her hands, "forgive your child for being the messenger of ill."

Morrel again changed color. Julie threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, father, father!" murmured she, "courage!"

"The 'Pharaoh' has, then, perished?" said Morrel, in a hoarse voice.

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The young girl did not speak, but made an affirmative sign with her head, as she lay on her father's breast.

"And the crew?" asked Morrel.

"Saved," said the girl; "saved by the crew of the vessel that has just entered the harbor."

Morrel raised his two hands to heaven with an expression of resignation and sublime gratitude.

"Thanks, my God!" said he; "at least you strike but me alone."

Spite of his phlegm, a tear moistened the eye of the Englishman.

"Come in—come in!" said Morrel; "for I presume you are all at the door."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, than Madame Morrel entered, weeping bitterly. Emmanuel followed her, and in the antechamber were visible the rough faces of seven or eight half-naked sailors.

At the sight of these men the Englishman started and advanced a step; then restrained himself, and retired to the farthest and most obscure corner of the apartment.

Madame Morrel sat down by her husband, and took one of his hands in hers; Julie still lay with her head on his shoulder; Emmanuel stood in the centre of the chamber, and seemed to form the link between Morrel's family and the sailors at the door.

"How did this happen?" said Morrel.

"Draw nearer, Penelon," said the young man, "and relate all."

An old seaman, bronzed by the tropical sun, advanced, twirling the remains of a hat between his hands.

"Good-day, M. Morrel!" said he, as if he had just quitted Marseilles the previous evening, and had just returned from Aix or Toulon.

"Good-day, Penelon!" returned Morrel, who could

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not refrain from smiling through his tears; "where is the captain?"

"The captain, M. Morrel—he has stayed behind sick at Palma, but, please God, it won't be much, and you will see him in a few days all alive and hearty."

"Well, now, tell your story, Penelon."

Penelon rolled his quid in his cheek, placed his hand before his mouth, turned his head, and sent a long jet of tobacco-juice into the antechamber, advanced his foot, and began.

"You see, M. Morrel," said he, "we were somewhere between Cape Blanc and Cape Bogador, sailing with a fair breeze south-southwest after a week's calm, when Captain Gaumard comes up to me—I was at the helm, I should tell you—and says, 'Penelon, what do you think of those clouds that are arising there?'

"I was just then looking at them myself. 'What do I think, captain? why, I think that they are rising faster than they have any business, and that they would not be so black if they did not mean mischief.'

"'That's my opinion, too,' said the captain, 'and I'll take precautions accordingly. We are carrying too much canvas. Holloa! all hands to slacken sail and lower the flying-jib.'

"It was time· the squall was on us and the vessel began to heel.

"'Ah!' said the captain, 'we have still too much canvas set; all hands to lower the mainsail!' Five minutes after it was down, and we sailed under mizzen-topsails and top-gallant sails."

"'Well, Penelon,' said the captain, 'what makes you shake your head?'

"'Why,' I says, 'I don't think that we shall stop here.'

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"'I think you are right,' answered he; 'we shall have a gale.'

"'A gale! more than that, we shall have a tempest, or I know nothing about it.'

"You could see the wind coming like the dust at Montredon; luckily the captain understood his business.

"'All hands take in two reefs in the topsails,' cried the captain; 'let go the bowlines, brace to, lower the top-gallant sails, haul out the reef-tackles on the yards.'"

"That was not enough for those latitudes," said the Englishman; 'I should have taken four reefs in the topsails, and lowered the mizzen."

His firm, sonorous, and unexpected voice made every one start. Penelon put his hand over his eyes, and then stared at the man who thus criticised the manœuvres of his captain.

"We did better than that, sir," said the old sailor, with a certain respect; "we put the helm to the wind to run before the tempest; ten minutes after we struck our topsails and scudded under bare poles."

"The vessel was very old to risk that," said the Englishman.

"Eh, it was that that wrecked us; after having been tossed about for twelve hours we sprung a leak. 'Penelon,' said the captain, 'I think we are sinking, give me the helm, and go down in the hold.'

"I gave him the helm, and descended; there was already three feet of water. I cried, 'All hands to the pumps!' but it was too late, and it seemed the more we pumped the more came in.

"'Ah!' said I, after four hours' work, 'since we are sinking, let us sink, we can die but once.'

"'That's the example you set, Penelon,' cries the captain; 'very well, wait a minute.'

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"He went into his cabin and came back with a brace of pistols.

"'I will blow the brains out of the first man who leaves the pump,' said he."

"Well done!" said the Englishman.

"There's nothing gives you so much courage as good reasons," continued the sailor; "and during that time the wind had abated, and the sea gone down, but the water kept rising; not much, only two inches an hour, but still it rose. Two inches an hour does not seem much, but in twelve hours that makes two feet, and three we had before, that makes five.

"'Come,' said the captain, 'we have done all in our power, and M. Morrel will have nothing to reproach us with: we have tried to save the ship, let us now save ourselves. To the boats, my lads, as quick as you can.'

"Now," continued Penelon, "you see, M. Morrel, a sailor is attached to his ship, but still more to his life; so we did not wait to be told twice; the more so, that the ship was sinking under us, and seemed to say, 'Get along, save yourselves.'

"We soon launched the boat, and all eight of us got into it. The captain descended the last, or, rather, he did not descend, he would not quit the vessel, so I took him around the waist and threw him into the boat, and then I jumped after him. It was time, for just as I jumped, the deck burst with a noise like the broadside of a man-of-war. Ten minutes after she pitched forward, then the other way, spun round and round, and then good-by to the 'Pharaoh.' As for us, we were three days without anything to eat or drink, so that we began to think of drawing lots who should feed the rest, when we saw 'La Gironde'; we made signals of distress, she perceived us, made for us, and took us all on

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board. There now, M. Morrel, that's the whole truth, on the honor of a sailor; is not it true, you fellows there?"

A gentle murmur of approbation showed that the narrator had faithfully detailed their misfortunes and sufferings.

"Well, well," said Morrel, "I know there was no one in fault but destiny. It was the will of God that this should happen, blessed be his name. What wages are due to you?"

"Oh, don't let us talk of that, M. Morrel."

"On the contrary, let us speak of it."

"Well, then, three months," said Penelon.

"Cocles! pay 200 francs to each of these good fellows," said Morrel. "At another time," added he, "I should have said, give them, besides, 200 francs over as a present; but times are changed, and the little money that remains to me is not my own."

Penelon turned to his companions, and exchanged a few words with them.

"As for that, M. Morrel," said he, again turning his quid. "As for that——"

"As for what?"

"The money."

"Well——"

"Well, we all say that fifty francs will be enough for us at present, and that we will wait for the rest."

"Thanks, my friends, thanks!" cried Morrel, gratefully; "take it—take it, and if you can find any other employer, enter his service; you are free to do so."

These last words produced a prodigious effect on the seamen. Penelon nearly swallowed his quid; fortunately he recovered.

"What! M. Morrel," said he, in a low voice, "you send us away, you are then angry with us?"

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"No, no," said M. Morrel, "I am not angry; on the contrary, I do not send you away; but I have no more ships, and therefore I do not want any sailors."

"No more ships," returned Penelon, "well, then you'll build some; we'll wait for you."

"I have no money to build ships with, Penelon," said the poor owner mournfully, "so I cannot accept your kind offer."

"No more money? then you must not pay us, we can go, like the 'Pharaoh,' under bare poles."

"Enough! enough!" cried Morrel, almost overpowered, "leave me, I pray you; we shall meet again in a happier time. Emmanuel, accompany them, and see that my orders are executed."

"At least, we shall see each other again, M. Morrel?" asked Penelon.

"Yes, I hope so, at least; now go."

He made a sign to Cocles, who marched first, the seamen followed him, and Emmanuel brought up the rear.

"Now," said the owner, to his wife and daughter, "leave me, I wish to speak with this gentleman."

And he glanced towards the clerk of Thomson & French, who had remained motionless in the corner during the scene, in which he had taken no part, except the few words we have mentioned. The two females looked at this person, whose presence they had entirely forgotten, and retired; but as she left the apartment, Julie gave the stranger a supplicating glance, to which he replied by a smile, that an indifferent spectator would have been surprised to see on his stern features.

The two men were left alone.

"Well, sir," said Morrel, sinking into a chair, "you have heard all, and I have nothing further to tell you."

"I see," returned the Englishman, "that a fresh and

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unmerited misfortune has overwhelmed you, and this only increases my desire to serve you."

"Oh! sir," cried Morrel.

"Let me see," continued the stranger, "I am one of your largest creditors."

"Your bills, at least, are the first that will fall due."

"Do you wish for time to pay?"

"A delay would save my honor, and consequently my life."

"How long a delay do you wish for?"

Morrel reflected.

"Two months," said he.

"I will give you three," replied the stranger.

"But," asked Morrel, "will the house of Thomson & French consent?"

"Oh! I take everything on myself. To-day is the 5th of June."

"Yes."

"Well, renew these bills up to the 5th of September, and on the 5th of September, at eleven o'clock (the hand of the clock pointed to eleven), I shall come to receive the money."

"I shall expect you," returned Morrel, "and I will pay you, or I shall be dead." These last words were uttered in so low a tone that the stranger could not hear them. The bills were renewed, the old ones destroyed, and the poor ship-owner found himself with three months before him to collect his resources. The Englishman received his thanks with the phlegm peculiar to his nation, and Morrel, overwhelming him with grateful blessings, conducted him to the staircase.

The stranger met Julie on the stairs; she affected to be descending, but, in reality, she was waiting for him.

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"Oh, sir!" said she, clasping her hands.

"Mademoiselle," said the stranger, "one day you will receive a letter, signed 'Sinbad the Sailor'; do exactly what the letter bids you, however strange it may appear."

"Yes, sir," returned Julie.

"Do you promise?"

"I swear to you I will."

"It is well. Adieu, mademoiselle! Remain as pure and virtuous as you are at present, and I have great hopes that Heaven will reward you by giving you Emmanuel for a husband."

Julie uttered a faint cry, blushed like a rose, and leaned against the baluster.

The stranger waved his hand, and continued to descend. In the court he found Penelon; who, with a rouleau of a hundred francs in either hand, seemed unable to make up his mind to retain them.

"Come with me, my friend," said the Englishman, "I wish to speak to you."

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CHAPTER XXX.

THE FIFTH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE delay afforded by the agent of the house of Thomson & French, at the moment when Morrel expected it least, appeared to the poor ship-owner one of those returns of good fortune, which announce to a man that fate is at length weary of wasting her spite upon him. The same day he related to his wife, to Emmanuel, and his daughter what had occurred to him, and a ray of hope, if not tranquillity, returned to the family. Unfortunately, however, Morrel had not only engagements with the house of Thomson & French, who had shown themselves so considerate towards him; and, as he had said, in business he had correspondents and not friends. When he reflected deeply, he could by no means account for this generous conduct on the part of Thomson & French towards him, and could only attribute it to the selfish reflection of the firm: "We had better support a man who owes us nearly 300,000 francs, and have that 300,000 francs at the end of three months, than hasten his ruin and have six or eight per cent. of capital."

Unfortunately, whether from hate or blindness, all Morrel's correspondents did not reflect similarly, and some made even a contrary reflection. The bills signed by Morrel were thus presented at his office with scrupulous exactitude, and thanks to the delay granted by the

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Englishman, were paid by Cocles with equal punctuality. Cocles thus remained in his accustomed tranquillity. It was Morrel alone who remembered with alarm, that if he had to repay on the 15th the 50,000 francs of M. de Boville, and on the 30th the 32,500 francs of bills, for which, as well as the debt due to the inspector of prisons, he had time granted, he must be a ruined man.

The opinion of all the commercial men was, that under the reverses which had successively weighed down Morrel, it was impossible for him to stand against it. Great, therefore, was the astonishment, when they saw the end of the month come, and he fulfilled all his engagements with his usual punctuality. Still confidence was not restored to all minds, and the general voice postponed only until the end of the month the complete ruin of the unfortunate ship-owner. The month passed amidst unheard-of efforts on the part of Morrel, to get in all his resources. Formerly, his paper at any date was taken with confidence and was even in request. Morrel now tried to negotiate bills at ninety days only, and found all the banks closed. Fortunately, Morrel had some moneys coming in on which he could rely, and as they reached him he found himself in a condition to meet his engagements when the end of July came.

The agent of Thomson & French had not been again seen at Marseilles: the day after, or two days after his visit to Morrel, he had disappeared, and as in that city he had had no intercourse but with the mayor, the inspector of prisons, and M. Morrel, his appearance left no other trace than the different remembrances of him which these three persons retained. As to the sailors of the "Pharaoh," it seemed that they must have found some engagement, for they had disappeared also.

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Captain Gaumard, recovered from his illness, had returned from Palma. He hesitated to present himself at Morrel's, but the owner, hearing his arrival, went to him. The worthy ship-owner knew from Penelon's recital of the captain's brave conduct during the storm, and tried to console him. He brought him also the amount of his wages, which Gaumard had not dared to apply for. As he descended the staircase, Morrel met Penelon, who was going up. Penelon had, it would seem, made good use of his money, for he was newly clad; when he saw his employer, the worthy tar seemed much embarrassed, drew on one side into the corner of the landing-place, passed his quid from one cheek to the other, stared stupidly with his great eyes, and only acknowledged the squeeze of the hand, which Morrel as usual gave him, by a slight pressure in return. Morrel attributed Penelon's embarrassment to the elegance of his attire. It was evident the good fellow had not gone to such expense on his own account; he was no doubt engaged on board some other vessel, and thus his bashfulness arose from the fact of his not having, if we may so express ourselves, worn mourning for the "Pharaoh" longer. Perhaps he had come to tell Captain Gaumard of his good luck, and to offer him employment from his new master.

"Worthy fellow," said Morrel, as he went away, "may your new master love you as I loved you, and be more fortunate than I have been!"

August rolled by in unceasing efforts on the part of Morrel to renew his credit or revive the old. On the 20th of August it was known at Marseilles that he had taken a place in the *malle-poste*, and then it was said that at the end of the month the docket was to be struck, and Morrel had gone away before, that he might

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not be present at this cruel act; but had left his chief clerk, Emmanuel, and his cashier, Cocles, to meet it. But, contrary to all expectation, when the 31st August came the house opened as usual, and Cocles appeared behind the grating of the counter, examined all bills presented with the same scrutiny, and, from first to last, paid all with the same precision. There came in, moreover, two repayments which M. Morrel had anticipated, and which Cocles paid as punctually as those bills which the ship-owner had accepted. All this was incomprehensible, and then, with the tenacity peculiar to prophets of bad news, the failure was put off until the end of September.

On the 1st Morrel returned; he was awaited by his family with extreme anxiety, for from this journey to Paris they hoped a last means of safety would arrive. Morrel had thought of Danglars, who was now immensely rich, and had lain under great obligations to Morrel in former days, since to him it was owing that Danglars entered the service of the Spanish banker, with whom had commenced his vast wealth. It was said at this moment that Danglars was worth from 5,000,000 to 7,000,000 fr., and had unlimited credit. Danglars, then, without taking a crown from his pocket, could save Morrel; he had but to pass his word for a loan, and Morrel was saved. Morrel had long thought of Danglars, but there are those instinctive revoltings impossible to control, and Morrel had delayed as long as possible, before he had recourse to this last resource. And Morrel was right, for he returned home borne down by all the humiliation of a refusal. Yet on his arrival Morrel did not utter a complaint, nor say one harsh word; he embraced his weeping wife and daughter, pressed Emmanuel's hand with friendly warmth,

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and then going to his private room on the second floor, he sent for Cocles.

"Then," said the two females to Emmanuel, "we are indeed ruined."

It was agreed, in a brief council held amongst them, that Julie should write to her brother, who was in garrison at Nismes, to come to them as speedily as possible. The poor women felt instinctively that they required all their strength to support the blow that impended. Besides, Maximilian Morrel, though hardly two-and-twenty, had great influence over his father. He was a strong-minded, upright young man. At the time when he decided on his profession his father had no desire to choose for him, but had consulted young Maximilian's taste. He had at once declared for a military life, and had in consequence studied hard, passed brilliantly through the Ecole Polytechnique, and left it as sub-lieutenant of the 53d of the line. For a year he had held this rank, and expected promotion on the first vacancy. In his regiment, Maximilian Morrel was noted as the most rigid observer, not only of the obligations imposed on a soldier, but also of the duties of a man, and he thus gained the name of "the stoic." We need hardly say, that many of those who gave him this epithet repeated it because they had heard it, and did not even know what it meant. This was the young man whom his mother and sister called to their aid to sustain them under the grave circumstances which they felt they would soon have to endure. They had not mistaken the gravity of this event, for the moment after Morrel had entered his cabinet with Cocles, Julie saw the latter leave it pale, trembling, and his features betraying the utmost consternation. She would have questioned him as he passed by her, but the worthy

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creature hastened down the staircase with unusual precipitation, and only raised his hands to heaven and exclaimed:

"O mademoiselle! mademoiselle! what a dreadful misfortune! Who could ever have believed it?"

A moment afterwards Julie saw him go upstairs carrying two or three heavy ledgers, a pocket-book, and a bag of money.

Morrel examined the ledgers, opened the pocket-book and counted the money. All his funds amounted to 6000 or 8000 francs, his expectancies up to the 5th to 4000 or 5000, which, making the best of everything, gave him 14,000 francs to meet bills amounting to 287,500 francs. He could not make such a proposal. However, when Morrel went down to his dinner, he appeared very composed. This calmness was the more alarming to the two women than the deepest dejection would have been. After dinner Morrel usually went out and used to take his coffee at the club of the Phoceens, and read the *Semaphore;* but this day he did not leave the house, but returned to his office.

As for Cocles, he seemed completely bewildered. For part of the day he went into the courtyard, seated himself on a stone with his head bare, and exposed to a sun of thirty degrees.

Emmanuel tried to comfort the females, but his eloquence faltered. The young man was too well acquainted with the house not to feel that a great catastrophe hung over the Morrel family.

Night came; the two women had watched, hoping that when he left his room, Morrel would come to them, and they heard him pass before their door, and trying to conceal the noise of his footsteps. They listened; he went into his sleeping-room, and fastened the door in-

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side. Madame Morrel sent her daughter to bed, and half an hour after Julie had retired she rose, took off her shoes, and went stealthily along the passage, to see through the keyhole what her husband was doing. In the passage she saw a retreating shadow; it was Julie, who, uneasy herself, had anticipated her mother. The young lady went towards Madame Morrel.

"He is writing," she said.

They had understood each other without speaking. Madame Morrel looked again through the keyhole; Morrel was writing; but Madame Morrel remarked what her daughter had not observed, that her husband was writing on stamped paper. The terrible idea that he was writing his will flashed across her; she shuddered, and yet had not strength to utter a word.

Next day M. Morrel seemed as calm as ever, went into his office as usual, came to his breakfast punctually, and then after dinner, he placed his daughter beside him, took her head in his arms, and held her for a long time against his bosom. In the evening, Julie told her mother, that although so calm in appearance, she had remarked that her father's heart beat violently.

The two next days passed almost similarly. On the evening of the 4th of September M. Morrel asked his daughter for the key of his cabinet. Julie trembled at this request, which seemed to her of bad omen. Why did her father ask for this key, which she always kept, and which was only taken from her in childhood as a punishment? The young girl looked at Morrel.

"What have I done wrong, father," she said, "that you should take this key from me?"

"Nothing, my dear," replied the unhappy man, the tears starting to his eyes at this simple question—"nothing, only I want it."

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Julie made a pretence to feel for the key.

"I must have left it in my room," she said.

And she went out, but instead of going to her apartment she hastened to consult Emmanuel.

"Do not give this key to your father," said he, "and to-morrow morning, if possible, do not quit him for a moment."

She questioned Emmanuel, but he knew nothing, or would not say it if he did.

During the night, between the 4th and 5th of September, Madame Morrel remained, listened for every sound, and until three o'clock in the morning she heard her husband pacing the room in great agitation. It was three o'clock when he threw himself on the bed. The mother and daughter passed the night together. They had expected Maximilian since the previous evening. At eight o'clock in the morning Morrel entered their chamber. He was calm, but the agitation of the night was legible in his pale and careworn visage. They did not dare to ask him how he had slept.

Morrel was kinder to his wife, more affectionate to his daughter, than he had ever been. He could not cease gazing at and kissing the sweet girl. Julie, mindful of Emmanuel's request, was following her father when he quitted the room, but he said to her, quickly:

"Remain with your mother, dearest."

Julie wished to accompany him.

"I wish you to do so," he said.

This was the first time Morrel had ever so spoken, but he said it in a tone of paternal kindness, and Julie did not dare to refuse compliance. She remained at the same spot, standing mute and motionless. An instant afterwards, the door opened, she felt two arms

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encircling her, and a mouth pressed her forehead. She looked up and uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Maximilian! my dearest brother!" she cried.

At these words Madame Morrel rose and threw herself into her son's arms.

"Mother!" said the young man, looking alternately at Madame Morrel and her daughter, "what has occurred —what has happened? Your letter has frightened me, and I have come hither with all speed."

"Julie," said Madame Morrel, making a sign to the young man, "go and tell your father that Maximilian has just arrived."

The young lady rushed out of the apartment, but on the first step of the staircase she found a man holding a letter in his hand.

"Are you not Mademoiselle Julie Morrel?" inquired the man with a strong Italian accent.

"Yes, sir," replied Julie, with hesitation; "what is your pleasure? I do not know you."

"Read this letter," he said, handing it to her.

Julie hesitated.

"It concerns the best interests of your father," said the messenger.

The young girl hastily took the letter from him. She opened it quickly and read:

Go this moment to the Allees de Meillan, enter the house No. 15, ask the porter for the key of the room on the fifth floor, enter the apartment, take from the corner of the mantel-piece a purse netted in red silk, and give it to your father. It is important that he should receive it before eleven o'clock. You promised to obey me implicitly. Remember your oath.

SINBAD THE SAILOR.

The young girl uttered a joyful cry, raised her eyes, looked round to question the messenger, but he had dis-

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appeared. She cast her eyes again over the note to peruse it a second time, and saw there was a postscript. She read:

It is important that you should fulfil this mission in person and alone; if you go accompanied by any other person, or should any one else present themselves, the porter will reply that he does not know anything about it.

This postscript was a great check to the young girl's joy. Was there nothing to fear? was there not some snare laid for her? Her innocence had kept her in ignorance of the dangers that might assail a young girl of her age: but there is no need to know danger in order to fear it: indeed, it may be observed, that it is usually unknown perils that inspire the greatest terror.

Julie hesitated, and resolved to take counsel. Yet, by a singular feeling, it was neither to her mother nor her brother that she applied, but to Emmanuel.

She hastened down and told him what had occurred on the day when the agent of the house of Thomson & French had come to her father's, related the scene on the staircase, repeated the promise she had made, and showed him the letter.

"You must go, then, mademoiselle," said Emmanuel.

"Go there!" murmured Julie.

"Yes, I will accompany you."

"But did you not read that I must be alone?" said Julie.

"And you shall be alone," replied the young man. "I will await you at the corner of the Rue du Musee, and if you are so long absent as to make me uneasy, I will hasten to rejoin you, and woe to him of whom you shall have cause to complain to me!"

"Then, Emmanuel," said the young girl, with hesi-

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tation, "it is your opinion that I should obey this invitation?"

"Yes. Did not the messenger say your father's safety was in it?"

"But what danger threatens him, then, Emmanuel?" she asked.

Emmanuel hesitated a moment, but his desire to make Julie decide immediately made him reply.

"Listen," he said, "to-day is the fifth of September—is it not?"

"Yes."

"To-day, then, at eleven o'clock, your father has nearly three hundred thousand francs to pay!"

"Yes, we know that."

"Well, then," continued Emmanuel, "we have not fifteen thousand francs in the house."

"What will happen, then?"

"Why, if to-day before eleven o'clock your father has not found some one who will come to his aid, he will be compelled at twelve o'clock to declare himself a bankrupt."

"Oh, come, then, come!" cried she, hastening away with the young man.

During this time Madame Morrel had told her son everything. The young man knew quite well that after the succession of misfortunes which had befallen his father, great changes had taken place in the style of living and housekeeping, but he did not know that matters had reached such a point. He was thunderstruck. Then, rushing hastily out of the apartment, he ran upstairs, expecting to find his father in his cabinet, but he rapped there in vain. Whilst he was yet at the door of the cabinet he heard the bedroom door open, turned and saw his father. Instead of going direct to

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his cabinet, M. Morrel had returned to his bedchamber, which he was only this moment quitting.

Morrel uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of his son, of whose arrival he was ignorant. He remained motionless on the spot, pressing with his left hand something he had concealed under his coat. Maximilian sprung down the staircase and threw his arms round his father's neck; but suddenly he recoiled, and placed his right hand on Morrel's breast.

"Father!" he exclaimed, turning pale as death, "what are you going to do with the brace of pistols under your coat?"

"Oh, this is what I feared!" said Morrel.

"Father, father! in Heaven's name," exclaimed the young man, "what are these weapons for?"

"Maximilian," replied Morrel, looking fixedly at his son, "you are a man, and a man of honor. Come, and I will explain to you."

And with a firm step, Morrel went up to his cabinet, while Maximilian followed him, trembling as he went. Morrel opened the door and closed it behind his son; then crossing the anteroom, went to his desk, on which he placed the pistols, and pointed with his finger to an open ledger. In this ledger was made out an exact balance-sheet of affairs. Morrel had to pay, within half an hour, 287,500 francs. All he possessed was 15,257 francs.

"Read!" said Morrel.

The young man was overwhelmed as he read. Morrel said not a word. What could he say? What need he add to such a desperate proof in figures?

"And you have done all that is possible, father, to meet this disastrous result?" asked the young man, after a moment's pause.

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"I have," replied Morrel.

"You have no money coming on which you can rely?"

"None."

"You have exhausted every resource?"

"All."

"And in half an hour," said Maximilian, in a gloomy voice, "our name is dishonored!"

"Blood washes out dishonor," said Morrel.

"You are right, sir; I understand you."

Then extending his hand towards one of the pistols, he said:

"There is one for you and one for me—thanks!"

Morrel checked his hand.

"Your mother—your sister! Who will support them?"

A shudder ran through the young man's frame.

"Father," he said, "do you reflect that you are bidding me to live?"

"Yes, I do bid you," answered Morrel; "it is your duty. You have a calm, strong mind, Maximilian; you are no ordinary man: I desire nothing—I command nothing. I only say to you, examine my position as if it were your own, and then judge for yourself."

The young man reflected an instant, then an expression of sublime resignation appeared in his eyes, and, with a slow and sad gesture, he took off his two epaulettes, the mark of his rank.

"Be it so, then, my father," he said, extending his hand to Morrel, "die in peace, my father; I will live."

Morrel was about to cast himself on his knees before his son, but Maximilian caught him in his arms, and those two noble hearts were pressed against each other for a moment.

"You know it is not my fault," said Morrel.

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Maximilian smiled.

"I know, father, you are the most honorable man I have ever known."

"Good, my son, and now all is said; go now and rejoin your mother and sister."

"My father," said the young man, bending his knee, "bless me!"

Morrel took his head between his two hands, drew him towards him, and kissing his forehead several times, said: "Oh! yes, yes, I bless you in my own name, and in the name of three generations of irreproachable men, who say by my voice—the edifice which misfortune has destroyed Providence may build up again. On seeing me die such a death, the most inexorable will have pity on you; to you perhaps they will accord the time they have refused to me; try that the word of disgrace be never pronounced; go to work, labor, young man, struggle ardently and courageously; live yourself, your mother and sister, with the most rigid economy, so that from day to day the property of those whom I leave in your hands may augment and fructify. Reflect how glorious a day it will be, how grand, how solemn that day of complete restoration—on which you will say in this very office: 'My father died because he could not do what I have this day done, for he died calmly and peaceably, because in dying he knew what I should do.'"

"My father! my father!" cried the young man, "why should you not live?"

"If I live all would be changed; if I live interest would be converted into doubt, pity into hostility; if I live I am only a man who has broken his word, failed in his engagements—in fact, only a bankrupt. If, on the contrary, I die, remember, Maximilian, my corpse

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is that of an honest but unfortunate man. Living, my best friends would avoid my house; dead, all Marseilles would follow me in tears to my last home. Living, you would feel shame at my name; dead, you may raise your head and say, 'I am the son of him you killed, because, for the first time, he has been compelled to fail in his word.'"

The young man uttered a groan, but appeared resigned.

"And now," said Morrel, "leave me alone, and endeavor to keep your mother and sister away."

"Will you not see my sister once more?" asked Maximilian.

A last but final hope was concealed by the young man in the effect of this interview, and therefore he had suggested it.

Morrel shook his head.

"I saw her this morning, and bade her adieu."

"Have you no particular commands to leave with me, my father?" inquired Maximilian in a faltering voice.

"Yes, my son, and a sacred command."

"Say it, my father."

"The house of Thomson & French is the only one, who, from humanity—or it may be selfishness—it is not for me to read men's hearts—have had any pity for me. His agent, who will in ten minutes present himself to receive the amount of a bill of 287,500 francs, I will not say granted, but offered me three months. Let this house be the first repaid, my son, and respect this man."

"Father, I will," said Maximilian.

"And now once more adieu," said Morrel; "go, leave me, I would be alone; you will find my will in the secretaire in my bedroom."

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The young man remained standing and motionless, having but the force of will, and not the power of execution.

"Hear me, Maximilian," said his father. "Suppose I was a soldier like you, and ordered to carry a certain redoubt, and you knew I must be killed in the assault, would you not say to me as you said just now, 'Go, father, for you are dishonored by delay, and death is preferable to shame!'"

"Yes, yes!" said the young man, "yes," and once again embracing his father with convulsive pressure, he said, "Be it so, my father."

And he rushed out of the cabinet.

When his son had left him, Morrel remained an instant standing with his eyes fixed on the door; then putting forth his arm, he pulled the bell.

After a moment's interval Cocles appeared.

It was no longer the same man—the fearful convictions of the three last days had crushed him. This thought—the house of Morrel is about to stop payment—bent him to the earth more than twenty years would otherwise have done.

"My worthy Cocles," said Morrel in a tone impossible to describe, "do you remain in the antechamber; when the gentleman who came three months ago, the agent of the house of Thomson & French, arrives, announce his arrival to me."

Cocles made no reply; he made a sign with his head, went into the anteroom, and seated himself.

Morrel fell back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the clock; there were seven minutes left, that was all; the hand moved on with incredible rapidity; it seemed to him as if he saw it progress.

What then passed, at this final moment of time, in the

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mind of this man, who, still young, had by a course of reasoning, false perhaps, but at least specious, was about to separate himself from all he loved in the world, and quit life, which possessed for him all domestic delights, it is impossible to express: to form the slightest idea of his feelings, he must have been seen with his brow bathed in perspiration, yet resigned; his eyes moistened with tears, and yet raised to Heaven.

The clock hand moved on; the pistols were cocked, he stretched forth his hand, took one up, and murmured his daughter's name.

Then he laid down the mortal weapon, took up his pen, and wrote a few words. It seemed to him as if he had not taken a sufficient farewell of his beloved daughter.

Then he turned again to the clock; he no longer counted by minutes, but by seconds. He took up the deadly weapon again, his mouth half-opened and his eyes fixed on the clock, and then shuddered at the click of the trigger as he cocked the pistol.

At this moment of mortal agony, a damp colder than death passed over his brow, an agony stronger than death clutched at his heartstrings.

He heard the door of the staircase creak on its hinges.

The clock gave its warning to strike eleven. The door of his cabinet opened. Morrel did not turn round, he expected these words of Cocles:

"The agent of Thomson & French."

He placed the muzzle of the pistol between his teeth. Suddenly he heard a cry—it was his daughter's voice. He turned and saw Julie; the pistol fell from his hands.

"My father!" cried the young girl, out of breath and

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half dead with joy. "Saved! you are saved!" And she threw herself into his arms, holding in her extended hand a red netted silk purse.

"Saved!—my child!" said Morrel, "what do you mean?"

"Yes, saved—saved! see, see!" said the young girl.

Morrel took the purse, and started as he did so, for a vague remembrance reminded him that it once belonged to himself. At one end was the bill for the 287,500 francs *receipted*, at the other was a diamond as large as a hazel nut, with these words on a small slip of parchment:

"JULIE'S DOWRY."

Morrel passed his hand over his brow: it seemed to him a dream. At this moment the clock struck eleven. The sound vibrated as if each stroke of the hammer struck on Morrel's heart.

"Explain, my child," he said; "explain—where did you find this purse?"

"In a house in the Allees de Meillan, No. 15, on the corner of a mantel-piece, in a small room on the fifth floor."

"But," cried Morrel, "this purse is not yours."

Julie handed to her father the letter she had received in the morning.

"And did you go alone?" asked M. Morrel, after he had read it.

"Emmanuel accompanied me, father. He was to have waited for me at the corner of the Rue de Musee, but, strange to say, he was not there when I returned."

"Monsieur Morrel!" exclaimed a voice on the stairs; "Monsieur Morrel!"

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"It is his voice!" said Julie.

At this moment Emmanuel entered, his countenance full of animation and joy.

"The 'Pharaoh!'" he cried; "the 'Pharaoh!'"

"What!—what! the 'Pharaoh!' are you mad, Emmanuel? You know the vessel is lost."

"The 'Pharaoh,' sir—they signal the 'Pharaoh!' The 'Pharaoh' is entering the harbor!"

Morrel fell back in his chair, his strength was failing him; his understanding, weakened by such events, refused to comprehend such incredible, unheard-of, fabulous facts.

But his son came in.

"Father!" cried Maximilian, "how could you say the 'Pharaoh' was lost? The watch-tower has signalled her, and they say she is now coming into port."

"My dear friends!" said Morrel, "if this were so, it must be a miracle of Heaven! Impossible! impossible!"

But what was real and not less incredible was the purse he held in his hand; the acceptance receipted—the splendid diamond.

"Ah! sir," exclaimed Cocles, "what can it mean—the 'Pharaoh?'"

"Come, my dear," said Morrel, rising from his seat, "let us go and see, and Heaven have pity on us if it be false intelligence."

They all went out, and on the stairs met Madame Morrel, who had been afraid to go up into the cabinet. In an instant they were at the Cannebiere. There was a crowd on the pier. All the crowd gave way before Morrel.

"The 'Pharaoh!' the 'Pharaoh!'" said every voice.

And wonderful to say, in front of the tower of Saint-

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Jean, was a ship bearing on her stern these words printed in white letters, "The Pharaoh, Morrel & Son, of Marseilles." It was precisely resembling the other "Pharaoh," and loaded as that had been with cochineal and indigo. It cast anchor, brailed all sails, and on the deck was Captain Gaumard giving orders, and Maitre Penelon making signals to M. Morrel.

To doubt any longer was impossible; there was the evidence of the senses and ten thousand persons, who came to corroborate the testimony.

As Morrel and his son embraced on the pier-head, in the presence and applause of the whole city witnessing this prodigy, a man with his face half covered by a black beard, and who, concealed behind the sentry-box, watched the scene with delight, uttered these words in a low tone, "Be happy, noble heart, be blessed for all the good thou hast done and wilt do hereafter, and let my gratitude rest in the shade with your kindness."

And with a smile in which joy and happiness were revealed, he left his hiding-place, and without being observed descended one of those flights of steps which serve for debarkation, and hailing three times, shouted, "Jacopo! Jacopo! Jacopo!"

Then a shallop came to shore, took him on board, and conveyed him to a yacht splendidly fitted up, on whose deck he sprung with the activity of a sailor; thence he once again looked towards Morrel, who, weeping with joy, was shaking hands most cordially with all the crowd around him, and thanking with a look the unknown benefactor, whom he seemed to be seeking in the skies.

"And now," said the unknown, "farewell kindness, humanity, and gratitude! Farewell to all the feelings that expand the heart! I have been Heaven's substi-

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tute to recompense the good—now the God of Vengeance yields to me his power to punish the wicked!"

At these words he gave a signal, and, as if only awaiting this signal, the yacht instantly put out to sea.

END OF VOLUME ONE.

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